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Works of the late reverend
William Romaine

WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND

WILLIAM ROMAINE, A. M.

RECTOR OF

SAINT ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE,

AND

Saint Ann, Blackfriars,

AND LECTURER OF

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A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

ON THE

HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM,

PREACHED

AT THE THURSDAY'S LECTURE, AT ST. DUNSTAN'S CHURCH, IN THE WEST, LONDON.

It becometh well the Juſt to be thankful.

Pſalm xxxiii.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

PREFACE.

THE following comment was not drawn up with any view to its publication. It was only intended for the pulpit, at the Thurſday's lecture at St. Dunſtan's, and after it had been preached would have been thrown aſide; for the author is obliged to make a ſermon every week, beſides the lecture, and he had no thoughts of ſending ſuch haſty compoſitions to the preſs. He knows that they want every qualification neceſſary to make them admired in this polite age: their manner is unfaſhionably plain and ſimple, they have nothing ſtudied or brilliant in their ſtyle, nor delicately nice in the method; no pretty turns of wit, or ſtriking antitheſes to entertain the reader. And the matter is as oppoſite to the eſtabliſhed taſte as the manner of them. They are

not in the leaſt indebted to the boaſted light of nature, they borrow no ornaments from the celebrated religion of nature, nor do they receive any aids from the moral ſcheme; but they are the plain honeſt truths of ſcripture, of the chriſtian church, and of the church of England. And yet theſe great authorities are not ſufficient to protect them from contempt, nor to excuſe the author from the charge of novelty. He is very ſenſible of it. He has been long enough acquainted with the received opinions of the age, and he cannot expect any kind of applauſe, and he thanks God he does not deſire it, from the preſent ſet of great and learned men. If you are doing right, you will certainly be cenſured; and if you reſolve to do right, you muſt learn to neglect cenſure; I have been prevailed on to neglect it by the earneſt and daily repeated importunity of the hearers of theſe lectures, by whom I was determined to make them public. They are here laid before the world, as they were preached, without any alteration; and if it pleaſe God to make them the inſtruments of doing ſome ſervice to

the ſouls of mankind, my loſs of reputation as an author will be fully repaid. If but one ſingle perſon ſhould find reaſon to bleſs God for theſe lectures, I ſhall not loſe my end. Although I hope they will be uſeful to many; and I pray the almighty God and Saviour of the world to ſend them out in his grace and ſtrength, and to accompany them abundantly with his divine power, and then his glory will be the more diſplayed, if any mighty effects ſhould be produced by ſuch weak inſtruments.

Every miniſter of the goſpel, who has any zeal for his maſter's honour, or love for the ſouls of men, ought to exert himſelf in theſe days of reproach and blaſphemy: for we are ſunk into the very dregs of the latter times, in which it was foretold that iniquity ſhould abound. And does it not now abound? has not his majeſty (king GEORGE the IId.) complained more than once from the throne of its abounding? has not the convocation at laſt (in the year 1755) ſeen it, and publicly confeſſed the abounding of iniquity? and is it not obvious to

every unprejudiced ſpectator, that our people, high and low, are totally corrupt, not only in morals, but alſo in principles? for it is too evident a truth to be denied, that we are departed from the doctrines of the reformation, and yet we keep up our ſubſcriptions to the articles and homilies then eſtabliſhed, which are entirely founded upon the certainty of the fall of mankind in Adam, and of their recovery in Jeſus Chriſt. We were wholly ruined by the one, and we are wholly ſaved by the other. The ſin of the one was imputed to us, as the righteouſneſs of the other is imputed to us. All the ſcripture is built upon theſe two truths, as well as the church of England. But no ſooner does a clergyman venture to ſpeak out upon theſe points, than he is immediately branded with the name of enthuſiaſt, although he has declared, in the moſt ſolemn manner before God, his aſſent and conſent to every thing contained in the articles and homilies upon the fall and redemption of mankind, and although the very perſons, who abuſe him, have done the ſame. Urge the plaineſt paſſages

of

of ſcripture, appeal to your ſubſcription, call upon reaſon, and ſummon matter of fact to bear teſtimony to the ſoberneſs of your faith, yet you cannot avoid an hard name. If you think of avoiding it, becauſe you do not deſerve it, you will find yourſelf miſtaken. I made the ſame miſtake, and fancied myſelf quite ſafe, while I had the ſcripture, and the church, on my ſide; until I found that a ſtrong ſuſpicion had gone out among ſome miniſterial clergy, as if I was leaning a little matter, and inclining as it were ſomething towards enthuſiaſm. And they ſuſpected this, becauſe I did not lean and incline towards them or their doctrines and practices; which moſt certainly I did not. Inſtead of defending the jew-bill, and the marriage-bill, I rather inſiſted upon the total corruption of mankind by the fall, and the freeneſs and fulneſs of redemption through Jeſus Chriſt, and the neceſſity of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to change and renew our corrupt hearts, in order to diſpoſe them to receive the benefits of Chriſt's redemption, and to enable them to live a holy and a chriſtian life. Theſe doctrines

doctrines are now dreſſed up by our great men in a bear-ſkin, and baited under the odious nick-name of Enthuſiaſm, and our people begin to join the cry, and to fancy, that a man muſt be a little tinctured with enthuſiaſm, before he will make himſelf ſo ridiculous, as to defend theſe exploded doctrines. But if others fear a nick-name from this quarter, I do not. The miniſterial clergy are welcome to call me what they pleaſe. I honour their reproach: for I find myſelf in the beſt of company by leaving theirs. The whole church of God, in the Old Teſtament and the New, believed and acted upon the truth of the doctrines before-mentioned. All the primitive fathers embraced them. The martyrs died, and ſealed the belief of them with their blood. The proteſtant church has with one voice maintained them. And the church of England has made the acknowledgment of them abſolutely neceſſary for every one of her miniſters, and therefore if it be enthuſiaſm to acknowledge what ſhe has made neceſſary, then the church of England is turned enthuſiaſt; and her beſt ſons are the ſtrongeſt enthuſiaſts.

enthuſiaſts. And what then are we to think of thoſe court divines, who expoſe their brethren, and ridicule them under the diſgraceful name of Enthuſiaſts, for no other reaſon, but becauſe we make a conſcience of our oaths and ſubſcriptions, and dare not riſque our eternal ſalvation for any preſent honour or preferment.

The generality of readers may not perhaps be acquainted with the true ſtate of the caſe, and therefore it may be uſeful to them to ſhew upon what footing theſe doctrines ſtand, which are now exploded under the odious name of enthuſiaſm. I will carry my enquiry no higher up than the reformation of the church of England, and will endeavour to convince the reader, that if we are enthuſiaſts for abiding by the doctrines of the reformation, then theſe perſons muſt be ſomething much worſe, who have ſubſcribed to thoſe doctrines, and yet have departed from them.

The fall of mankind in Adam, their corruption, their forfeiture through and in him are now openly denied. But hear what our church ſays upon theſe points.

In

In the office for public baptiſm, we have theſe words, " Foraſmuch as all men are " conceived and born in ſin, and that " our ſaviour Chriſt ſaith, none can enter " into the kingdom of God, except he be " regenerate and born anew of water " and of the Holy Ghoſt." Mind, we are conceived in ſin, and then born in ſin, and it is neceſſary to be born anew of the holy Spirit. The ninth article explains the matter thus:

" Original ſin ſtandeth not in the fol- " lowing of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and cor- " ruption of the nature of every man, " that naturally is engendered of the " offſpring of Adam, whereby man is " very far gone from original righteouſ- " neſs, and is of his own nature inclined " to evil, ſo that the fleſh luſteth always " contrary to ſpirit."

The homilies are full of the ſame doctrine. The ſecond part of the ſermon on the miſery of man has theſe words. " Thus " we have heard, how evil we be of our- " ſelves, how of ourſelves, and by our-

" ſelves,

" ſelves, we have no goodneſs, help, or ſal-
" vation, but contrariwiſe, ſin, damnation,
" and death everlaſting: which, if we deep-
" ly weigh and conſider, we ſhall the better
" underſtand the great mercy of God, and
" how our ſalvation cometh only by Chriſt:
" for in ourſelves (as of ourſelves) we
" find nothing whereby we may be de-
" livered from this miſerable captivity
" into the which we are caſt through the
" envy of the devil, by breaking of God's
" commandment in our firſt parent Adam.
" We are all become unclean, but we
" all are not able to cleanſe ourſelves, nor
" make one another of us clean. We
" are by nature the children of God's
" wrath, but we are not able to make
" ourſelves the children and inheritors
" of God's glory. We are ſheep that run
" aſtray, but we cannot of our own power
" come again to the ſheepfold, ſo great is
" our imperfection and weakneſs."

Theſe words want no comment; they deſcribe our natural corruption by the fall in ſuch clear and expreſs terms, that all the art of ſophiſtry cannot explain them away. I will confirm their teſtimony by

two

two biſhops of our church, that by the mouth of two witneſſes the truth may be eſtabliſhed. Biſhop Wilkins on prayer has theſe words,

" All the pravity and baſeneſs, which " fills up every part and power about us, " are but diffuſions of our original cor- " ruptions. What a world of miſchief " is there in our ſeveral parts? our wills, " affections, our tongues, eyes; and yet " all theſe are but as little rivulets; the " fountain, or rather the ſea that feeds " them, is our corrupt nature."

Biſhop Beveridge ſhall be my other authority; the title of the fourth article of his private thoughts is this,

" I believe that I was conceived in ſin, " and brought forth in iniquity; and that " ever ſince I have been continually con- " ceiving miſchief, and bringing forth " vanity."

" This article of my faith I muſt of ne- " ceſſity believe, whether I will or no; " for if I could not believe it to be true, " I ſhould therefore have the more cauſe " to believe it to be ſo; becauſe, unleſs " my heart was naturally very ſinful and corrupt,

" corrupt, it would be impoſſible for me
" not to believe that which I have ſo
" much cauſe continually to bewail; or,
" if I do not bewail it, I have ſtill the
" more cauſe to believe it; and there-
" fore, am ſo much the more perſuaded
" of it, by how much the leſs I find my-
" ſelf affected with it. For, certainly,
" I muſt be a hard hearted wretch indeed,
" ſteeped in ſin, and fraught with corrup-
" tion to the higheſt, if I know myſelf ſo
" oft to have incenſed the wrath of the
" moſt high God againſt me, as I do,
" and yet not be ſenſible of my natural
" corruption, nor acknowledge myſelf to
" be, by nature a child of wrath, as well
" as others. For I verily believe, that the
" want of ſuch a due ſenſe of myſelf, ar-
" gues as much original corruption, as
" murder and whoredom do actual pollu-
" tion. And I ſhall ever ſuſpect thoſe to
" be the moſt under the power of that
" corruption that labour moſt, by argu-
" ments, to diveſt it of its power."

" And, therefore, for my own part, I
" am reſolved, by the grace of God, ne-
" ver to go about to confute that by wil-
" ful arguments, which I find ſo true by

" woe-

" woeful experience. If there be not a
" bitter root in my heart, whence pro-
" ceeds ſo much bitter fruit in my life and
" converſation? alas! I can neither ſet
" my head nor heart about any thing,
" but I ſtill ſhew myſelf to be the ſinful
" offſpring of ſinful parents, by being
" the ſinful parent of a ſinful off-
" ſpring; nay, I do not only betray
" the inbred venom of my heart, by poi-
" ſoning my common actions, but even
" my moſt religious performances alſo
" with ſin. I cannot pray, but I ſin; I
" cannot hear, or preach a ſermon, but
" I ſin; I cannot give an alms, or re-
" ceive the ſacrament, but I ſin; nay, I
" cannot ſo much as confeſs my ſins, but
" my very confeſſions are ſtill aggrava-
" tions of them; my repentance needs to
" be repented of, my tears want waſhing,
" and the very waſhing of my tears needs
" ſtill to be waſhed over again with the
" blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not
" only the worſt of my ſins, but even the
" beſt of my duties, ſpeak me a child of
" Adam. Inſomuch, that whenſoever I
" reflect upon my paſt actions, methinks
" I cannot but look upon my whole life,

" from

" from the time of my conception to this
" very moment, to be but as one conti-
" nued act of ſin."

" And whence can ſuch a continued
" ſtream of corruption flow from, but
" from the corrupt ciſtern of my heart?
" and whence can that corrupt ciſtern of
" my heart be filled, but from the corrupt
" fountain of my nature? ceaſe, there-
" fore, O my ſoul, to gainſay the power
" of original ſin within thee, and labour
" now to ſubdue it under thee. But why
" do I ſpeak of my ſubduing this ſin my-
" ſelf? ſurely, this would be both an ar-
" gument of it, and an addition to it.
" 'Tis to thee, O my God, who art both
" the ſearcher and cleanſer of hearts, that
" I deſire to make my moan: 'tis to thee
" I cry out in the bitterneſs of my ſoul.
" O wretched man that I am, who ſhall
" deliver me from the body of this death?
" who ſhall? Oh! who can do it but
" thyſelf? ariſe thou therefore, O my
" God, and ſhew thyſelf as infinitely mer-
" ciful in the pardoning, as thou art in-
" finitely powerful in the purging away
" my ſins."

Theſe

Theſe words ſo clearly deſcribe the great truth, which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh in the following lectures, that I could not avoid citing them at full length. And now, if the reader will ſum up the evidence, and impartially review what our articles, and homilies, and our biſhops have taught concerning the corrupt fallen ſtate of mankind, he will certainly acquit us of the charge of enthuſiaſm, who ſay nothing more than they have ſaid, and who are obliged by our ſubſcriptions to ſay all that they have ſaid.

The ſecond doctrine of chriſtianity, which is now ridiculed under the name of enthuſiaſm, is the free and full redemption of mankind through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we are juſtified from all the ſinfulneſs and miſeries of the fall.

The thirteenth article abſolutely excludes every work of ours from having any hand in juſtifying us, and ſtates the caſe thus, " Works done before the grace " of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his " ſpirit, are not pleaſant to God, foraſ- " much as they ſpring not of faith in " Jeſus

" Jeſus Chriſt, neither do they make men " meet to receive, or as the ſchool au- " thors ſay, deſerve grace of congruity; " yea rather, for that they are not done, " as God hath willed and commanded " them to be done, we doubt not but " they have the nature of ſin."

The title of the ſecond homily is this, " A ſermon on the ſalvation of mankind " by ONLY Chriſt our Saviour, from ſin " and death everlaſting." This homily " is divided into three parts, the laſt be- " gins with theſe words, " It hath been " manifeſtly declared unto you, that no " man can fulfil the law of God, and " therefore by the law all men are con- " demned; whereupon it followeth ne- " ceſſarily, that ſome other thing ſhould " be required for our ſalvation, than the " law: and that is a true and lively faith " in Chriſt bringing forth good works, " and a life according to God's com- " mandments. And alſo you heard the " ancient fathers minds of this ſaying, " faith in Chriſt only juſtifieth man, ſo " plainly declared, that you ſee that the " very true meaning of this propoſition

" or

" or ſaying, we be juſtified by faith in " Chriſt only (according to the meaning " of the old ancient authors) is this: we " put our faith in Chriſt, that we be juſ- " tified by him only, that we be juſtified " by God's free mercy, and the merits of " our Saviour Chriſt only, and by no " virtue or good works of our own, that " is in us, or that we can be able to have, " or to do, for to deſerve the ſame. Chriſt " himſelf only, being the cauſe merito- " rious thereof."

Biſhop Reynolds has explained the doctrine in the ſame manner in the folio edition of his works printed 1658, p. 251.

" Juſtification that is by faith is of meer " grace and favour, no way of work or " merit: for the act whereby faith juſti- " fies is an act of humility, and ſelf-dere- " liction, and holy deſpair of any thing " in ourſelves, and a going to Chriſt, a " receiving, a looking towards him, and " his all-ſufficiency; ſo that as Mary ſaid " of herſelf, ſo we may ſay of faith, the " Lord hath reſpect unto the lowlineſs of " his grace, which is ſo far from looking " inward for matter of juſtification, that

" itſelf

" itſelf as it is a work of the heart, *τὸ cre-*
" *dere*, doth not juſtify, but only as it
" is an apprehenſion or taking hold of
" Chriſt. For as the hand in the very
" receiving of a thing, muſt needs firſt
" make itſelf empty; (if it be full before,
" it muſt let all that go, ere it can take
" hold on any other thing) ſo faith being
" a receiving of Chriſt, John i. 12. muſt
" needs ſuppoſe an emptineſs in the ſoul
" before."

My good Biſhop Beveridge is of the ſame opinion. In the eighth article of his private thoughts he has theſe words,

" 'Tis a matter of admiration to me,
" how any one, that pretends to the uſe
" of his reaſon, can imagine, that he
" ſhall be accepted before God, for what
" comes from himſelf! for how is it poſ-
" ſible, that I ſhould be juſtified by good
" works, when I can do no good works
" at all before I be juſtified? my works
" cannot be accepted as good, 'till my
" perſon be ſo, nor can my perſon be
" accepted by God, till firſt engrafted
" into Chriſt; before which engrafting
" into the true vine, 'tis impoſſible I

" ſhould bring forth good fruit, for the
" plowing of the wicked is ſin, ſays So-
" lomon. Prov. xxi. 4. Yea the ſacri-
" fices of the wicked are an abomination
" to the Lord. Ch. xv. 8. and if both the
" civil and ſpiritual actions of the wicked
" be ſin, which of all their actions ſhall
" have the honour to juſtify them before
" God? I know not how it is with
" others, but for my own part I do not
" remember, neither do I believe, that
" I ever prayed in all my life time with
" that reverence, or heard with that at-
" tention, or received the ſacrament with
" that faith, or did any other work what-
" ſoever with that pure heart and ſin-
" gle eye, as I ought to have done. In-
" ſomuch that I look upon all my righ-
" teouſneſſes but as filthy rags, and it is
" in the robes only of the righteouſneſs
" of the Son of God, that I dare appear
" before the majeſty of heaven."

I leave the reader to make his own remarks upon theſe authorities; for if he ſhould deny the truth of the doctrine, which they maintain, yet he cannot poſſibly deny, that they do maintain it, and there-

therefore if we are enthuſiaſts for inſiſting upon the free and full redemption of mankind through Jeſus Chriſt by whom we are juſtified from all the miſeries of the fall, then our articles, and homilies, and the moſt pious and learned of our biſhops, have not only led the way into this enthuſiaſm, but have alſo compelled us to walk in it; and therefore the hard name ſhould fall upon them, and not upon us.

There is another doctrine, which is mightily ridiculed at preſent, and that is the neceſſity of the grace of the holy Spirit to change and renew our corrupt nature in order to diſpoſe us to receive the benefits of Chriſt's redemption, and to enable us to live a holy and a chriſtian life. This is at preſent the very touchſtone of enthuſiaſm. If you ſeem but to favour this opinion, you are immediately ſuſpected of being a little brainſick, and the moment you ſpeak out, you are ſuppoſed to be fit for Bedlam. And grave ſober moraliſts, nay large ſolemn divines, give you over for a ruined man, and your very friends begin to be afraid, that you

will loſe your uſefulneſs. This treatment is unaccountable, and I believe will appear ſo to the candid reader, if he will but impartially conſider the tenth article of our church.

" The condition of man after the fall " is ſuch, that he cannot turn and pre- " pare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength " and good works to faith and calling " upon God, without the grace of God " by Chriſt preventing us, that we may " have a good will and working with us, " when we have that good will."

The firſt part of the homily for Whitſunday has theſe words,

" It is the holy Ghoſt, and no other " thing, that doth quicken the minds of " men, ſtirring up good and godly moti- " ons in their hearts, which are agree- " able to the will and commandment of " God, ſuch as otherwiſe of their own " crooked and perverſe nature they " ſhould never have. That which is " born of the Spirit is Spirit; as who " ſhould ſay, man of his own nature is " fleſhly and carnal, corrupt and naught, " ſinful and diſobedient to God, without

" any

" any ſpark of goodneſs in him, without " any virtuous or godly motion, only " given to evil thoughts and wicked " deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, " the fruits of faith, charitable and " godly motions, if he have any at all " in him, they proceed only of the holy " Ghoſt, who is the ONLY worker of " our ſanctification, and maketh us new " men in Chriſt Jeſus."

To the ſame effect biſhop Reynolds in his ſinfulneſs of ſin, p. 140.

" Look into your hearts, and you ſhall " find a very hell of uncleanneſs, full " of deep, and unſearchable deceit and " wickedneſs, full of hardneſs: no ſins, " no judgements, no mercies, no allure- " ments, no hopes, no fears, no promiſes, " no inſtructions, able to ſtartle, to " awaken, to melt or ſhape it to a bet- " ter image, without the immediate om- " nipotency of that God which melts the " mountains, and turns ſtones into ſons " of Abraham."

In the ſame ſtrain biſhop Beveridge, whom I admire ſo much, becauſe he

was as great an enthuſiaſt as myſelf, ſays,

Reſolution III.

" I am reſolved, that as I am not " able to think or do any thing that is " good, without the influence of the di- " vine grace; ſo I will not pretend to " merit any favour from God, upon ac- " count of any thing I do for his glory " and ſervice.

" And indeed I may very well put this " reſolution among the reſt, for ſhould I " reſolve to perform my reſolutions by " mine own ſtrength, I might as well re- " ſolve never to perform them at all: for " truth itſelf, and mine own woful experi- " ence hath convinced me, that I am not " able of myſelf ſo much as to think a good " thought: and how then ſhall I be able " of myſelf, to reſolve upon rules of holi- " neſs, according to the word of God, or " to order my converſation according to " theſe reſolutions, without the concur- " rence of the divine grace."

If the reader will weigh theſe authorities carefully and impartially, I am very

very certain, that he will acquit me of the charge of enthuſiaſm: for upon their evidence every miniſter of the church of England is bound to believe, that all men fell in Adam, and that free and full redemption is offered to all men in Jeſus Chriſt, by whoſe good Spirit our fallen nature is to be reſtored, and we may have grace and power to live a holy and a chriſtian life. This is my faith. In this I hope to live and die. And if our court brethren reckon me an enthuſiaſt for embracing it, are they not diſſenters for rejecting it? for do they not diſſent from the articles and homilies of their own church, and from their own ſubſcriptions? and an enthuſiaſt, dreſs him up in ever ſo ridiculous a light, is a more amiable character, than a diſſenter of this ſtamp, who ſets his hand to one thing, and his heart to another, who ſubſcribes to what he does not believe, and who has moſt ſolemnly engaged before God to build up thoſe very doctrines, which he is trying to preach down. An enthuſiaſt, with all his miſtakes, may be an honeſt man, but ſuch perſons are—

what

what ſhall I call them? ſurely not honeſt men. Reader, give them their proper name. Suppoſe the church of England had forced us to ſubſcribe to enthuſiaſtic doctrines, and we were enthuſiaſts enough to believe them, certainly we are leſs blameable, than theſe perſons, who do not believe them, and yet do ſubſcribe to them, rather than not be candidates for the high honours and revenues of the church. If they deſpiſe me, I ſhall not envy them. Let me be poor with a good conſcience, and let them be rich. Let me be a deſpiſed enthuſiaſt, and let them be highly honoured. May God make me thankful for what I hope for in the other world, and let them enjoy as much as they can get in this.

And now, reader, let me aſk thee one plain queſtion, and I beg of thee to anſwer it impartially. After what has been ſaid, doſt thou really take me to be an enthuſiaſt? if thou doſt, only conſider, that what thou calleſt enthuſiaſm in me is the doctrine of ſcripture, and of the articles and homiles of the church of England, and of her ſoundeſt biſhops and miniſters

in

in her better days. But if thou giveſt me this hard name, becauſe my brethren do not preach up the ſame doctrines, which I do, how is that my fault? If they pay no regard to their ſubſcriptions, why ſhouldeſt thou load me with reproach for their crime? if they diſſent from the church, is that any reaſon why thou ſhouldeſt diſſent from it, or why thou ſhouldeſt think the worſe of me for not diſſenting? but if thou wilt nevertheleſs call me an enthuſiaſt, without any reaſon, nay againſt all reaſon, then I will learn to bear it. And may God forgive thee, as I do from my heart, but I pray thee read no farther; ſtop here; throw the book into the fire, and it will ſave thee a good deal of vexation; and when thou art more open to conviction, perhaps I may lay ſomething before thee that may be of ſervice. In the mean time farewel.

But, reader, if thou doſt not take me to be an enthuſiaſt, I thank thee for thy good opinion. Peruſe the following lectures, and compare them with the doctrines of ſcripture and of the reformation, and I doubt not but thou wilt be fully convinced

vinced of the antiquity and ſoundneſs of what is here advanced. Only let me give thee a friendly caution againſt being miſled by a ſet of infidel writers, who pretend to give characters of books, which they never read, in a thing called The Monthly Review, in which I have ſeen every ſound doctrine of chriſtianity ridiculed and blaſphemed, and every damnable hereſy openly defended and maintained. I expect no favour from theſe men. I deſire none. To be ſpoken of well by them would be indeed reproach; their abuſes will do me ſervice, and they may load me with enthuſiaſm, I will carry it patiently, and would ſuffer any infamy or torment upon earth, rather than be anſwerable for their horrid blaſphemies againſt Jehovah and his Chriſt. And I hope, reader, that the evidence, which I have laid before thee, will prevail againſt the ſcandal of theſe monthly reviewers. If thou art as indifferent about what they ſay of me, as I am, it will not move thee at all; but thou wilt think the better of me the more I am abuſed by them.

And

And whenever thou ſeeſt an author degraded and vilified by them, if thou wilt take my advice, buy the book, depend upon it there is ſomething very excellent in it, and I dare promiſe thou wilt never be diſappointed.

I have nothing more, kind reader, to offer thee at preſent, but to commend thee to the grace and bleſſing of almighty God, who will I hope accompany thee in the reading of theſe lectures, and render them the means of making thee more thankful to Jeſus Chriſt. And if thou doſt indeed receive any benefit from them, give him all the glory. I expect no reward but to be remembered in thy prayers. And if thou wilt always mention me in thy addreſſes to the throne of grace, then I ſhall be bound to pray for thee. And may God hear us both, and enrich thee and me with all his graces and bleſſings in heavenly things through Jeſus Chriſt.

A

PRACTICAL COMMENT

ON THE

HUNDRED AND SEVENTH PSALM.

SERMON I.

PSALM CVII. 1, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever: let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

THE book of Psalms is a treasury of divine knowledge. It contains a complete collection of sacred hymns, which were composed in praise of the blessed Jesus—whose miraculous birth—whose life and actions—sufferings and death—resurrection and ascension—and investiture and supreme power on the throne of glory—his gathering the church out of all lands—and protecting

ing it to the end of the world, againſt its enemies—and then putting it in poſſeſſion of eternal glory—are the ſubjects here treated of. And they are the moſt noble and elevated ſubjects in themſelves, and beſides they are the moſt intereſting to every believer. Every part of them is full of wonder and miracle, which deſerve his greater attention and eſteem, becauſe each of them was done for his ſalvation. And the author, who undertook to write upon theſe ſubjects, has not fallen below their dignity: he has recommended them to us by all the graces of language, and the ſublimity of ſentiment. His poetry is worthy of himſelf, and raiſes up to the merits of that adorable perſon whom it celebrates: for it came from heaven. The Pſalms were not the compoſition of king David, or the flights of his poetical imagination; he was only the ſcribe, who copied them from the dictates of the all-wiſe Spirit: they are indeed the inſpiration of the Almighty, whoſe the matter is, and from whom the words themſelves proceeded. And if any perſons doubt of it, let them take any one deſcription of nature out of the Pſalms and compare it with what the beſt heathen authors have ſaid on the ſame ſubject, and they will ſee reaſon enough to be abaſhed and confounded at the abject poverty of the human genius, when put in competition with the infinite perfection of the inſpired volume. And how ſhould it be otherwiſe? the heathens had

had no ſuch ſubject, nor no ſuch inſpirer. They were ignorant of the perſon and excellencies of the great deliverer of mankind, and how then could they ſing his praiſes? or if they had known of him, yet they had no infinitely wiſe author, no eternal Spirit to dictate to them: their higheſt poetry was but the work of men, and of very ignorant men too: but this collection of hymns was indeed the work of God, and coming from him, it is as much ſuperior to any human compoſition, as the infinite Author is ſuperior to his creatures. On this account it deſerves our greateſt eſteem and veneration, and we cannot value it too much; ſince we have here a richer treaſury of heavenly knowledge, than is any where elſe to be met with. And may we look upon it in this light, and treat it accordingly, may it be our continual ſtudy and delight, until we enter into the ſpirit of theſe divine hymns, and reap all the inſtruction and profit from them, which God intended they ſhould be the means of adminiſtering to his church.

And I hope the ſame Spirit who recorded this particular hymn, which I purpoſe to explain in the courſe of theſe lectures, will be graciouſly pleaſed to accompany us in the explanation of it, and to give us his bleſſing. He left it upon record, as a leſſon of gratitude, to inſpire us with thankſgiving and praiſe to our bleſſed Saviour, and we always want to be ſtirred up to the prac-

tice of this duty. Our hearts are ſtrangely averſe to it—they are by nature unholy and unthankful—and whatever we may talk of our fancied moral rectitude, and how pleaſing a thing it is to be grateful to one another, yet with reſpect to God we are not, nor is it pleaſing to us to endeavour to be grateful: for we are always, every moment of our lives, receiving mercies from God; but how few moments do we ſpend in making proper acknowledgements for them? and they who endeavour the moſt to be ſincerely thankful, yet often find their affections cold and languid, and want freſh motives to warm and inflame them: and even they, who have the greateſt knowledge of the abundant mercies of God their Creator and Redeemer, and have a grateful ſenſe of them, yet freely confeſs, that they are not ſo grateful as they could wiſh, and it grieves them to find, that they do not love God in ſo perfect a degree as they ought to love him. And therefore the ſubject of this Pſalm will be uſeful to us all: we all ſtand in need of every aſſiſtance, which can help us to render proper thankſgiving and praiſe to our ſovereign Lord and Saviour. And the holy Spirit here offers us his aſſiſtance: he left us this hymn to be the means of inſpiring us with grateful hearts, and he will doubtleſs accompany his own means with his own grace. May he help us to meditate upon it with devout and humble tempers, that He,

who

who is now in the midſt of us, and from whom no ſecrets are hid, may diſpoſe us to make a right uſe of his ſacred word, and may pour down his grace plentifully upon us, filling our ſouls with praiſe and gratitude to the God of our ſalvation.

Before I enter upon the diſtinct conſideration of the ſeveral parts of the Pſalm, I judge it will be uſeful to lay before you a general plan of the whole, that you may afterwards more readily follow me, when I come to particulars. And this ſhall be my preſent ſubject. Upon the firſt reading of the Pſalm every believer will obſerve the principal ſcope and deſign of it, which are contained under theſe four points.

Firſt, We are called upon to be thankful for redemption in the three firſt verſes.

Secondly, From the 4th verſe to the 33d, the reaſons for our thankfulneſs are aſſigned, which are taken from God's redeeming us from the loweſt ſtate of ſin and miſery. And

Thirdly, From his manner of protecting us after we are redeemed and brought into his church, from the 34th to the 42d verſe. And

Fourthly, In the two laſt verſes we have the application, exhorting us to ſtudy and to underſtand thoſe mercies of redemption, that we may be full of thankſgiving and praiſe for them.

This is the general plan. The Author is the holy Spirit. The ſubject is thankſgiving to Chriſt the Redeemer. The motives, here urged, to incite us to practiſe this duty, are taken from the many great and ineſtimable bleſſings of redemption. In order to give us clear and juſt ideas of this redemption, the holy Spirit has ſelected four images from nature, to repreſent the exquiſite diſtreſs and miſery of man in his natural ſtate; they are the moſt ſtriking images, which he who knows our hearts could ſet before us, and they are ſo highly finiſhed, that they want no grace or ornament which infinite wiſdom itſelf was able to give them. He compares us while we lay in our natural fallen ſtate, firſt to men who have loſt their way in a deſolate wilderneſs, and are ready to periſh with hunger; ſecondly, to men, who are fallen into the pit of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, where they lay bound in miſery and iron; thirdly, to men, who have ſuch a weak and viciated appetite, that they loath even the ſmell of wholeſome meat; and fourthly, to men, who are in the utmoſt diſtreſs at ſea in a violent ſtorm. Theſe four images put together make a complete picture of our miſerable fallen condition; and the perſons who are in this condition, are ſuppoſed in the Pſalm to be brought to a deep ſenſe of its miſery—they feel their guilt, and dread its puniſhment—conſcience is awakened and alarmed—

and

and the ſmart and anguiſh of it grow inſupportable. This ſeems very afflicting, but it is the work of God. He makes them feel their miſery, that the ſenſe of it may force them to ſeek relief, where only it is to be found, for no ſooner do they ſend up their petitions to the throne of grace, than the almighty Saviour inſtantly ſends them deliverance, as it is remarked in each of theſe four inſtances, that when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, then he delivered them out of their diſtreſs. He was diſpoſed to grant them help, long before they were willing to receive it. And ſuch was his redeeming love, ſo abundant were the riches of his mercy to thoſe diſtreſſed objects, that he not only delivered them, but alſo beſtowed upon them every manner of thing that is good. Although he had freely lifted them up from the loweſt ſtate of ſin and miſery, yet he never once upbraided them with their former wretchedneſs, never withheld his loving kindneſs, nor ſtopped the current of his favours; but pardoned them, and juſtified them, and ſtill went on ſanctifying them, until he placed the crown of eternal glory upon their heads. Oh! what a love was this! what infinite mercy was it to take theſe miſerable ſinners from the vileſt ſink of corruption, and to exalt them to be the moſt glorious ſaints in heaven! Does not this call aloud for your gratitude? Is not this the higheſt inſtance of God's redeeming

mercy—of that very mercy which is ſaid to be over all his works: for it is to us ſinners, above them all in degree, and beyond them all in duration. And how then can we refrain from that juſt tribute of praiſe, which the holy Spirit calls upon us under each of theſe four inſtances to pay to our great deliverer. O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men. After theſe four inſtances of man's exquiſite diſtreſs and miſery by nature, and of his full and perfect recovery by grace, the Pſalmiſt goes on to deſcribe the flouriſhing ſtate of the gentile church, when the jewiſh ſhould be caſt off and rejected. And this part of the Pſalm is like the preceding, elevated and ſublime. From the 32d to the 39th verſe, the chriſtian church is repreſented under the image of a well-watered country, where the face of nature is all verdant and blooming, where the earth produces its grain, the trees their fruit in great abundance, where you ſee plenty ſmiling around you, and peace ſecuring the poſſeſſion, and grace giving a reliſh to the enjoyment of this happy ſcene. God thus turneth the wilderneſs into a ſtanding water—and the dry ground into water-ſprings, and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may ſow the field, and plant vineyards, which may yield them fruits of increaſe: he bleſſeth them alſo, &c. Such is the gentile church,

church but the jewiſh, now caſt off and rejected, is compared to a deſolate wilderneſs, where there is neither ſtanding water, nor water-ſprings, where you ſee nothing growing, not the leaſt verdure appears. There is not one ſingle field ſown with grain. Not one flouriſhing tree lifts up its fruitful head, neither the olive nor the vine take root in this barren ſoil, ſo that there is neither wine to make glad the heart of man, nor oil to make him of a cheerful countenance. The whole proſpect is one dry deſolate wilderneſs.

And this part of the Pſalm is fulfilled. The chriſtian church has been in this flouriſhing condition, and the jewiſh church is now like a ſandy wilderneſs---neither refreſhed with the dew of heaven, nor made fertile by the ſtreams of divine grace: and for want of their genial influence, it is ſo parched and burnt up, that nothing grows either for uſe or ornament.

And the ſame gracious Governor and Saviour of the world, who rejected the Jews, and caſt them into this barren wilderneſs, becauſe they rejected him, and caſt him off from being Lord over them, can and will alſo humble us in the ſame manner, if we be guilty of the ſame crime. The preſent wretched ſtate of the Jews is a ſtanding leſſon to thoſe perſons, who will not receive Jeſus for their God: and may his grace diſpoſe them

them to make a right uſe of this leſſon, leſt it ſhould ſoon be exemplified in their own deſtruction: for we of this church and kingdom have much to fear from our national infidelity. Several churches and kingdoms have been deſtroyed for this crime, and the holy Spirit in the 39th and 40th verſes of this Pſalm declares, that this is the common method of our Lord's providence. Whenever a people after various calls and admonitions from heaven (and we have had many ſuch lately) ſtill remain incorrigible in their deiſtical opinions about Chriſt's divinity, and their treaſonable practices againſt him, then his good Spirit no longer ſtrives with them, but gives them over to a reprobate mind—And again they are diminiſhed and brought low, through oppreſſion, affliction, and ſorrow. The chriſtians are certainly diminiſhed and brought low—they are diminiſhed in number, and brought low in circumſtances, inſomuch that we have great reaſon to apprehend our candleſtick may be ſoon removed, and the light of the pure goſpel may ſhine no more among us. Were it not that our God is good, we might expect to be finally cut off: but the mercies of Jeſus are infinite. He has borne with us long. Oh! that his long ſuffering may not be wearied out, but may have the deſired effect, and lead us to repentance. So iniquity ſhall not be our ruin. Bleſſed Jeſus, ſpare us a little, and let our people have one more

more offer of thy grace and mercy, before the deſtroying angel be ſent to viſit us, and cut us off.

After this ſtriking account of the various ſtates and revolutions of the church, there follows in the 41ſt verſe, a moſt ſweet promiſe to the few poor followers of the Redeemer—Yet ſetteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor in ſpirit he removes out of the reach of affliction—the God, in whom they truſt, will protect and keep them ſafe amidſt public calamities. No evil ſhall come nigh to hurt them. When a nation is viſited for their infidelity, and is ſcourged with the ſharp rod of war or peſtilence, then the deſtroying angel ſhall have no power over them. Their almighty God and Saviour will encamp around them; and then ſays the prophet, "Though an hoſt of men "were ſet againſt me, yet would not my heart "be afraid, and though there roſe up war againſt "me, yet will I put my truſt in him." He truſted in God's promiſes, and he had good reaſon: for he has engaged to be an impregnable wall of braſs around his faithful people, when they are threatened with perſecution or diſtreſs: and muſt not theſe perſons be quite out of the reach of evil, who are ſurrounded with a brazen wall, and the Almighty himſelf guards and defends it? and this was his promiſe to Jeremiah, and through him to every believer

in

in the ſame circumſtances, Jer. xv. 20. " And I, " ſays God, will make thee unto this people a " fenced brazen wall, and they ſhall fight againſt " thee, but they ſhall not prevail againſt thee, " for I am with thee to ſave thee, and to deliver " thee, ſaith the Lord." He will ſave and deliver his people, and they ſhall be at peace, while the reſt of the world is at war: for he ſetteth the poor on high out of the reach of affliction, and then it follows, he maketh him houſholds, like a flock of ſheep. No ſhepherd can watch over his flock with a more tender care, or provide better for their welfare, than the great ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls provides for his flock: under his moſt affectionate and almighty protection, each of them is ſo completely happy, that he can truly declare—" The " Lord is my ſhepherd, therefore can I lack " nothing." And having thus experienced the love and care of the chief ſhepherd, how can they withhold from him, that juſt tribute of praiſe and gratitude, which he demands?

Theſe are ſuch great and weighty points, and we are ſo nearly concerned in them, that we ought not to paſs them by unnoticed: for our preſent and eternal ſalvation depend on our intereſt in them, and therefore they ſhould be conſtantly in our thoughts, that by meditating upon them properly, they may be the means of inſpiring us with continual gratitude. And the holy

holy Spirit recorded them in this Pſalm, for this very purpoſe, and every believer applies them to the ſame end. His redemption---the guilt and miſery from which he was reedeemed---the free grace of the redeemer---the great and endleſs bleſſings, which he purchaſed for us freely, and which he beſtows without money, and without price---bleſſings truly ineſtimable---in this world the greateſt we are capable of receiving---in the next world the higheſt he has to give, and of the ſame duration with himſelf, even infinite and eternal bleſſings; who can think on theſe bleſſings without thankſgiving? for what muſt your hearts be, if there be any little dirty groveling object upon this earth, which engages your thoughts, and fixes your affections in preference to theſe infinite and eternal bleſſings? Oh! what low creatures are we, notwithſtanding our boaſted dignity, and fancied rectitude; how abjectly baſe are we, to preſer ſhadows to ſubſtance, and time to eternity? to ſpend our lives in the concerns of this periſhing world, and to have no thought or care about the buſineſs of the eternal world? this is ſo irrational and abſurd, and ſo monſtrouſly wicked, that it is indeed ſinking ourſelves below the beaſts that periſh. And although never did more men act this low part, than at preſent, yet was there never more boaſting of the dignity of human nature. And what is the worſt of all, our moral

moral rectitude, and our other high metaphyſical notions are ſo far from ſetting us right, that they indiſpoſe us to receive the only remedy which can cure us. Where nature fails, what can come in to our aid, but grace! and the grace of God is now an exploded opinion. To talk of it is mere enthuſiaſm, and to urge the ſcriptures which ſpeak of it, and which maintain its neceſſity, this is called religious rant and madneſs: for the metaphyſician wants none of the aids of grace to lead him into all truth, nor does the moraliſt want any aſſiſtance from grace to enable him to practice the whole duty of man. And it can be to little purpoſe, to perſuade perſons under theſe ſtrong deluſions to think ſeriouſly about their redemption, and to take a view of their miſery without it; for they are prejudiced. They love and cheriſh the oppoſite opinions. And to work upon men of theſe tempers, requires ſome power ſuperior to human. God alone is equal to it. And may he open the eyes of this deluded generation, that they may be diſpoſed to hear the comfortable doctrines delivered in this Pſalm, and to receive them in ſuch a manner, that they may ſee the wonderful mercies of God in redemption, and may, together with the righteous, rejoice and give thanks. And when this great and happy event ſhall be brought about, may our almighty God and Saviour effect it ſoon, then it follows in the 42d verſe, All ini-

quity ſhall ſtop her mouth. The adverſary ſhall be ſilenced. The enemies of our Lord, ſeeing his tender care and watchful providence over his people, and finding all their attempts againſt them unſucceſsful, ſhall hold their peace. They ſhall be ſilenced, if not convinced. They ſhall be confounded at the wonders, which the Lord ſhall work for the ſalvation of men, and ſhall have no power to object, either to the Redeemer, or to his redeemed people---All iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth.

O! that will be an happy day! when ſhall we ſee it? when ſhall iniquity be ſtruck dumb? we hear it daily in our ſtreets uttering hard ſpeeches againſt the Lord and againſt his Chriſt---againſt them, although our Lord's divinity be ſecured by the fundamental laws of this land, yet we have volumes upon volumes publiſhed---againſt them the more polite part of the world retail the daring blaſphemies of theſe volumes---and againſt them the common people begin to ſuck in greedily the blaſphemies of their ſuperiors. When ſhall we ſee an end of theſe impieties? O God let it be ſoon. Let iniquity ſoon ſtop her mouth, and let it never be opened again, to object to thoſe wiſe and gracious methods, by which thou haſt decreed to bring many ſons unto glory through Jeſus Chriſt.

I am now come to the 43d verſe, where the holy Spirit calls upon every reader to meditate upon

upon the great ſubjects treated of in this Pſalm, "Whoſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things"—whoever has a true taſte and reliſh for ſpiritual matters, and is bleſſed with the true wiſdom that is from above, he will obſerve theſe things. He will make his remarks upon them with judgment. He will meditate upon them often, ſtudy them much, and delight himſelf in them greatly: and therefore having this Pſalm, and the other ſcriptures for his direction, whereby he may inveſtigate and trace out the ways of providence, it will be the whole bent of his ſoul to attain this wiſdom. And there is no part of the ſubject, which affords more curious, and at the ſame time more intereſting meditations, than the view of the wonders which God hath done for the redemption of man. Every time they are judiciouſly reviewed, we ſee freſh matter for adoration and praiſe. Our hearts grow warm with the ſenſe of them, our affections kindle, and our love to our moſt bleſſed Redeemer is inflamed. Whoſo is wiſe will meditate thus to his profit, and he will ſo obſerve, ſo remark what he hears and reads, as to grow the wiſer for hearing, and the better for reading. And would to God every one of us was wiſe to obſerve the great points of our redemption. The holy Spirit calls upon us to remark them, and he declares that we are not wiſe, unleſs we obſerve them. Whoſo is wiſe, will obſerve theſe things. If this be

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the only wiſdom, O how few of us are wiſe indeed---how very few are wiſe in the judgment of the holy Spirit. Moſt of us are wiſe enough in other matters, and are deeply read in what does not concern us; but in this great point we are very babes. We have not learned our firſt rudiments. And certainly we have been too long children in underſtanding; it is now high time to ſeek for wiſdom, and there is no wiſdom worth ſeeking but that which is here mentioned, viz. ſuch wiſdom as enables us to underſtand the wonderful works of God in our redemption, and then diſpoſes us to practice what we underſtand, and further gives us the power as well as the will to live up to it. And does wiſdom, true and perfect wiſdom, like this, grow upon our earth? Hear what a venerable patriarch thought of this matter, "But where ſhall wiſdom "be found? and where is the place of under-"ſtanding? man knoweth not the price thereof, "neither is it found in the land of the living," Job xxviii. 12. This was Job's opinion. If you refuſe to ſubſcribe to it, tell us, where is the true wiſdom to be found? is it taught in any of the ſchools of modern philoſophy? can the metaphyſician ſoar high enough to the regions of this wiſdom, and bring it down to mortal view? or can the profeſſors of Ethics teach it us among the rules of their morality? alas! alas! it is far above the reach of their higheſt attainments

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even to diſcover it, and much more to practice it: for the ſubjects on which it is exerciſed are the high and deep things of God, of which philoſophy can know nothing. The great apoſtle gives this reaſon (1 Cor. ii. 14.) "But the "natural man" (and would to God philoſophers were not ſuch) "receiveth not the things of "the ſpirit of God: for they are fooliſhneſs "unto him: neither can he know them, becauſe "they are ſpiritually diſcerned." And this ſpiritual diſcernment is the wiſdom that is from above. It is not a learned attainment, but it is the gift of the holy Spirit, and the proud philoſopher ſo much diſdains to ſeek it from his grace, that he calls it extravagant enthuſiaſm, even to ſuppoſe that the holy Spirit will give it. But if this be enthuſiaſm the ſcripture is full of it. "The Lord, ſays Solomon, giveth wiſdom, out "of his mouth cometh knowledge and under-"ſtanding" (Prov. ii. 6.) and it is written in the prophets---"And they ſhall be all taught of "God." And again in the New Teſtament; "if any of you lack wiſdom?" What ſhall we do---go and ſtudy ſyſtems of ethics, and read volumes of morality? No. We muſt take a method, that is now reckoned the higheſt madneſs of enthuſiaſm. "If any of you lack "wiſdom, Says St. James, let him aſk it of "God." How ſtrangely this ſounds---Aſk it of God, what! is he the only giver of this wiſdom?

wiſdom? He is. For he giveth to all men, who aſk it in faith, liberally, and upbraideth not. Let theſe men, who are wiſe above what is written, call it what they pleaſe, to aſk wiſdom of God; yet theſe promiſes are clear and full, and the humble chriſtian reſts upon them, and knows them to be infallible: for he has experienced their truth. And may the almighty Spirit ſo bring down and humble our natural pride, that we may all have this happy experience, and may find the laſt words of the Pſalm verified in ourſelves---whoſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things, and they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord, i. e. they ſhall know it clearly and fully, and they ſhall have a lively ſenſe of it upon their hearts: for they had before made their remarks upon it, and had laid together their obſervations, and had applied them to uſe, and then the knowledge became experimental. And the original word, as well as the meaning of the paſſage, juſtifies this conſtruction: for the verb which we render, and they ſhall underſtand, is in the conjugation hithpael, which is peculiar to the ſacred tongue, and which is uſed here to denote, that they ſhould build themſelves up by this underſtanding; it ſhould produce its proper effects upon themſelves, and the end of knowing it ſhould be fully anſwered. By which means it could not be a matter of mere

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ſcience or dry ſpeculation, but would produce many great and bleſſed conſequences---enabling them to taſte and ſee that the Lord was merciful, and filling their hearts with thankſgiving and praiſe for all his mercies.

I have now laid before you the general plan of the whole Pſalm---you ſee the great ſubject here treated of is redemption---and the proper diſpoſition of mind, with which we are to conſider it, is a thankful heart---and the holy Spirit recorded this ſacred hymn to be the means of exciting in us thankfulneſs. And may his grace and bleſſing go along with theſe lectures upon it, and bring them home with ſuch power and evidence to your hearts, that his gracious intentions in recording it may be fully anſwered. And if it be the ſincere deſire of your ſouls, if you indeed wiſh to find profit from theſe lectures, then I will only detain you, while I give you two or three ſhort exhortations, relating to the general plan, which I have laid before you.

The firſt is an exhortation to the reading of the Pſalm, which I hope you will frequently do in private. It is an abſtract of the whole bible: for the two great ſubjects of the Old Teſtament and the New, are man's ſin and miſery by nature, and his recovery by grace, and theſe are here clearly, though briefly diſcuſſed. You will therefore

fore greatly profit from reading it, if you remember the four chief parts of what it confiſts, viz.

Firſt, An exhortation to thankſgiving, in the three firſt verſes, for redemption.

Secondly, The reaſons for our thankſgiving from the 4th to the 33d verſe, relating to man's miſery before redemption. And

Thirdly, Reaſons relating to Chriſt's manner of governing the church, after it is redeemed, from the 34th to the 42d verſe. And

Fourthly, The application, exhorting us to ſtudy and to underſtand theſe mercies of redemption, that our thankſgiving may flow from a grateful heart. The more you read the Pſalm in this view, the better you will underſtand it, and the more reaſon you will find to admire its excellencies. And

Secondly, I would not only exhort you to read it much, but alſo to pray for that humble teachable temper, which alone can render the reading of it profitable to your ſouls. It is the word of God; it is the inſtruction which the all-wiſe Spirit has provided in order to inſpire you with love and thankfulneſs to your moſt adorable Saviour. And when he vouchſafes to inſtruct you, hear with all humility, and learn of him the words of eternal life. Let his will be yours---his commandments your delight. But

Thirdly, Let it be chiefly remembered from whence the bleſſing of all is to come: for nei-

ther can the humble frame of mind, nor the benefit arifing from it, be attained by our own abilities. They muft both come from one and the fame Spirit. God muft firft teach us the grace of humility, and then enable us to reap profit from it: for he is the giver of every good and fpiritual gift. So that whenever you begin to read this or any other portion of fcripture, if you defire it fhould be profitable to your fouls, always look up to the holy Spirit, and defire his gracious affiftance. This was the prophet's method, " Lord open thou mine eyes, that I " may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And thefe wondrous things we may alfo behold, if we read the law of God as he did, with humility and prayer. And if you defire to fee the wonderful wifdom of God in the plan of your redemption, you muft ufe the prophet's words--- Lord open thou mine eyes to fee it: for you could no more fee this wifdom, unlefs the day ftar was arifen and fhone bright in your hearts, than you could fee thefe outward objects, unlefs the light of the fun fhone in your eyes. And therefore convinced of this, let fo many of us as lack wifdom, now afk it of God, and I know of no words more fignificant and expreffive, nor yet more devout and pious, than thefe of our own church, which I fhall apply to the prefent occafion.

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O almighty and eternal Spirit, who haſt cauſed this ſacred hymn to be written for our learning, ſend down thy bleſſing upon our ſtudies in it. And grant that we may in ſuch wiſe hear it, read it, mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt it, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

PSALM CVII. 1, 2, 3.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: For his mercy endureth for ever: Let the redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and gathered them out of the lands, from the eaſt, and from the weſt, from the north, and from the ſouth.

IN the laſt lecture I laid before you the general plan of this ſacred hymn. The great ſubject of it is thankſgiving. The motives to induce us to be thankful are taken from the mercies of God. We are bound to bleſs and praiſe his holy name for every inſtance of his goodneſs, but above all for that ineſtimable inſtance of his love, in redeeming us from the loweſt ſtate of ſin and miſery, and then freely beſtowing upon us pardon and peace in this world, and eternal life and glory in the next. The holy Spirit inſiſts chiefly upon this inſtance, trying to awaken in us ſome ſenſe of gratitude for theſe bleſſings of redemption. His arguments are the moſt likely to work upon our hearts, and therefore I will endeavour to open and explain them, truſting to his guidance, and hoping for his bleſſing.

And

And may he now take all our hearts into his protection, and drive away every vain intruding thought, which would either diſſipate our attention, or diſtract our affections; and give us, O holy Spirit, the hearing ear, to know what it is to be thankful, and the underſtanding heart to be able to practice it, that when we finiſh our preſent meditations, we may be the better for them, and may be the more diſpoſed to join in praiſe and thankſgiving to Jeſus Chriſt our moſt adorable God and Saviour.

The holy Spirit has ſet the bleſſings of redemption before us in ſo clear and ſtriking a light, that they, who are not affected with the view of them in this Pſalm, muſt be dead to all ſenſe of gratitude. But I would hope there are not many ſuch among you. Every one of you may not perhaps be actuated by the moſt lively and warm ſentiments of thanks to your bleſſed Redeemer, but you have no objection againſt having your hearts more inflamed with his love; rather you wiſh your hearts were more his, than they are; and that your affections were placed and fixed upon him with more delight. Come then, ye who are thus diſpoſed, and hear how many powerful motives the holy Spirit has uſed to inſpire you with ſincere gratitude to the God of your ſalvation. " O give thanks unto the " Lord—for he is good—for his mercy endureth " for ever." Thus he begins the Pſalm, calling

upon you to practice the ſweet duty of thankſgiving, which ariſes from our experience of the Redeemer's mercies, and therefore we cannot but receive great delight, whenever we ſo remember his mercies, as to find ſtill ſtronger motives to bleſs and praiſe him for them. And this is what we are called upon to practice in the firſt words—O give thanks—and the duty may be thus defined. Thankſgiving is a grateful expreſſion of praiſe, ariſing from an heart ſenſible of the mercies of redemption. Becauſe I ſhall always uſe the word in this ſenſe, I muſt deſire you to remember, that by thankſgiving I mean, a grateful expreſſion of praiſe, &c. It is ſuch a grateful expreſſion of praiſe, as comes from the heart: for no man will praiſe God until he has ſome ſenſe and perception of God's mercy, and praiſe is not a lip-ſervice, it does not conſiſt in uttering a ſet of thankful words; it is not the praiſe of the mouth, but of the heart. Religious praiſe is the ſervice of the affections, and flows from true and hearty love to that object which we praiſe: for we are always ready enough to praiſe the thing that we delight in. Whatever is the dear object of our affections, on it we are laviſh enough of our praiſes. The heart will command all the faculties to be where its treaſure is—attending upon it with their tribute of praiſe. And if Jeſus the Redeemer be our treaſure, then we ſhall conſtantly attend upon him with

with the praiſes of a grateful heart: but he cannot be our treaſure, until we deſire to have ſome intereſt in him, and therefore I add in the laſt words of the definition, that the heart muſt be ſenſible of the mercies of redemption: for it is certain we cannot be diſpoſed to thank God for mercies, of which we have no deſire to taſte, neither indeed will we thank him, unleſs we have a lively perception, and are perfectly ſenſible of his mercies; conſequently our thankſgiving will be according to our ſenſe of them. If we find him beſtowing upon us great and numerous and unmerited favours, then our thanks will riſe in proportion to what we experience. But ſtill he, who has no ſenſe of God's mercies, can have no motive to offer him any thanks: becauſe thankſgiving is only expreſſing with the mouth, and the other faculties what the heart feels; and therefore if the heart, which is the ſpring, be not moved, it is impoſſible the other faculties ſhould have any motion. The Pſalmiſt ſays, "O praiſe the Lord, for it is a good thing "to ſing praiſes unto our God, yea, a joyful and "pleaſant thing it is to be thankful:" here he ſuppoſes, that we muſt firſt rejoice in the mercies of God, before we can find it a joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful for them; becauſe we cannot return him praiſes with joy for that, in which we have found no joy. It is as impoſſible for us to rejoice in that thing, of which

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we have not an affectionate ſenſe and pereeption, as it would be for a dead man to rejoice; and therefore thankſgiving can ariſe only from a grateful heart, which is ſenſible of the bleſſings of redemption.

This is the nature of the duty: the reaſons for practiſing it follow—O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good—he is eſſential goodneſs, being the origin and fountain from whence all created goodneſs flowed. Goodneſs in the Deity denotes that diſpoſition, whereby he is inclined to communicate happineſs. It was owing to this beneficent attribute, that he created the beautiful ſyſtem of the world out of nothing, and made all the living creatures in it to ſhare and partake of his goodneſs; and therefore after he had finiſhed the works of creation and formation, he pronounced them all to be very good. And they were good, and they continued ſo, until ſin corrupted them. For ſin brought in all evil, which is the oppoſite to goodneſs, and then the remembrance of God's former goodneſs only aggravated our guilt, and made our evil more inexcuſable: and before our guilty conſciences could be ſet at reſt, we muſt have a firm reliance upon ſome more amiable attribute than goodneſs, which we ſinners had offended againſt, and which does not imply any diſpoſition to forgive the offence. God had been good to the innocent, but he muſt be juſt to ſinners. If he had

had freely exercifed his goodnefs to us while innocent, yet when we offended, we put ourfelves out of the reach of his goodnefs, and then juftice took place: and when juftice was extreme to mark what we had done amifs, what could finful wretched man hope for? nothing from goodnefs: becaufe its former favours had been abufed and repaid with ingratitude; therefore guilt and mifery muft have been our portion for ever, unlefs fome more gracious attribute than goodnefs, fhould be revealed to us, and therefore the holy Spirit makes mercy, even eternal mercy, wait upon goodnefs, that it may become a proper fubject of thankfgiving, "O give thanks "unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy "endureth for ever." Goodnefs was fhewn to the innocent—mercy is for the guilty; and we can thank God for the goodnefs of creation, when we have experienced the mercies of redemption. Mercy is that difpofition in the Deity, whereby he is inclinable to relieve the miferable: it is the attribute of pity and compaffion, which can be exercifed only upon them who are in diftrefs. Mercy has for its object fin, with all its miferable confequences; and it is exercifed in removing them; and the perfon by whom it is exercifed is our moft compaffionate high prieft Chrift Jefus, to whofe mercy it is owing that we were not confumed: for when goodnefs could no longer employ its kind offices

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for us, then our merciful God was pleaſed to bring into execution that gracious plan of redemption, which had been contrived before all worlds, and by which many ſons were to be brought unto glory. The holy, bleſſed, and glorious Trinity, out of infinite love and compaſſion, were pleaſed to agree upon this plan, and to ſuſtain diſtinct offices in the œconomy of it, and as their perſons are equally infinite, their œconomical actions muſt conſequently be equally infinite. God the Father covenanted to demand perfect ſatisfaction for ſin, and to accept the perfect ſatisfaction made by the obedience and ſufferings of God the Son, which he covenanted to make in our ſtead, and as our repreſentative in the human nature. And God the holy Spirit covenanted to render the obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt effectual to believers, and by his grace to carry on the whole work of redemption in their hearts. St. Paul aſſures us, that the covenant of grace, which is the fountain of all mercy, was made before the foundation of the world, and this he repeats in ſeveral of his epiſtles. The Pſalmiſt teaches the ſame doctrine, and frequently calls upon us to thank God, becauſe his mercy is for ever and ever—becauſe his mercy is everlaſting—and in the text, becauſe his mercy endureth for ever; the word endureth is inſerted by the tranſlators: for there is no verb in the original; neither in ſtrictneſs of

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ſpeech could there be any: becauſe there was no time, wherein this mercy was not exerciſed, neither will there be any time when the exerciſe of it will fail. It was begun before all worlds, when the covenant of grace was made, and it will continue to the ages of eternity, after this world is deſtroyed. So that mercy was, and is, and will be, for ever, and ſinful miſerable man may always find relief from this eternal mercy, whenever the ſenſe of his miſery diſpoſes him to ſeek for it. And does not this motive loudly call upon us to give thanks? becauſe there is mercy with God—mercy to pity the miſerable—and even to relieve them—although they do not deſerve it: for mercy is all free-grace and unmerited love. Oh! how adorable then and gracious is this attribute? how ſweet is it and full of conſolation to the guilty? may God bring all the comforts of it to your hearts, and if you deſire, if you would know, what theſe comforts are, aſk the Redeemed of the Lord, and they will tell you, that his mercies are great beyond deſcription. They can ſay, upon their own experience, that they have found the mercies of redemption to be in number, in value, and in duration, more and greater than they can expreſs: and to their experience the holy Spirit refers you in the 2d verſe, The redeemed of the Lord ſhall ſay ſo—they ſhall ſay that he is good, and that his mercies are eternal. What then is

this redemption of which they ſpeak in ſuch high terms? and why do they make it the chief ſubject of their thankſgiving? the reaſon follows, becauſe he redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. Moſes has given us in the law a clear and full idea of what we are to underſtand by the word *gal*, here rendered *redeemed*. If any perſon was either ſold for a ſlave, or carried away for a captive, then his kinſman, who was neareſt to him in blood, had the right and equity of redemption. But no other perſon was ſuffered to redeem. And ſuch a kinſman is called the redeemer, when he paid down the price for which his relation was ſold to be a ſlave, or paid the ranſom for which he was led captive. And there is another remarkable inſtance in the law, wherein it was provided, that in caſe any perſon was found murdered, then the neareſt to him in blood was to proſecute the murderer, and to bring him to juſtice, and this neareſt relation thus avenging the murder is called by the ſame name a redeemer. And how beautifully is the office of our great Redeemer repreſented under theſe three inſtances? he was to us ſuch a Redeemer in ſpirituals, as theſe were in temporals: for ſin had brought all mankind into ſlavery and captivity, and had murdered us. We are ſlaves to ſin, and captives to ſatan: St. Paul confeſſes both---ſold unto ſin, ſays he, and led away captive under the law of ſin. And in this ſtate of bondage

bondage and captivity we had a moſt cruel tyrant to reign over us, even he who was a murderer from the beginning, and who employed us in thoſe ſlaviſh ſervices, where we could find no peace in time, nor any reſt to eternity: for he gave us no wages but death---death of the body to this world, and death of the ſoul from God in the next world for ever. O miſerable man, who ſhall deliver thee, who ſhall redeem thee from the body of this death? Thou art entirely, eternally miſerable in thyſelf; but thou mayeſt thank God, through Chriſt our Lord, that there is a Redeemer who is able to ſave thee. He has every qualification which the law required in a Redeemer, and he is beſides almighty: for he is true and very God, equal in all things with the Father and the holy Spirit; and as ſoon as ſin was in the world, he entered upon his gracious office of Redeemer: for he was the lamb ſlain in type and figure from the foundation of the world. And when he had a body prepared for him, wherein he was to be ſlain indeed, and was made fleſh of our fleſh, then he completed the legal character of a Redeemer. When he was pleaſed to unite our human nature to his divine, then he was neareſt of kin to us. By this wonderful union he became our brother, and next to us in blood. And thus he was perfectly able to fulfil the law of our redemption, which ſuffered none to have the right and equity of redeeming,

redeeming, except the neareſt kinſman. And to this our God condeſcended. O! amazing inſtance of his divine love. That God ſhould be united to man and partake of our human nature, that we might partake of his divine, this is the great myſtery of godlineſs. We can never adore, never praiſe him enough for it, becauſe by it we receive full redemption. This moſt high God, who was alſo man, united in one Chriſt, came into the world to redeem us. And the ſame perſon being both God and man, muſt merit for us as God, in what he did for us as man. Accordingly by the merits of his obedience and ſufferings he paid the price of our redemption, and we were no longer the ſervants of ſin; and by his moſt precious blood ſhed upon the croſs, by his death and reſurrection, he overcame both death, and him who had the power of death: and by delivering us in this manner from ſlavery and captivity, he fulfilled the third part of the Redeemer's office: for ſatan was the murderer from the beginning, who had given both body and ſoul a mortal wound of ſin, which was certain death, and eternal miſery. And the Redeemer came to avenge the murder. He took our cauſe in hand, as being our neareſt kinſman, and it coſt him his own life to avenge ours. He ſhed his own blood upon the croſs to avenge our blood, and he died that we might be brought back to life, and then he roſe again to

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demonſtrate his victory over the infernal murderer. And he has now all power in heaven and earth, that he may effectually redeem every one, who deſires to be freed from the ſlavery of ſin, from the captivity of ſatan, and the power of death. Such is our all-ſufficient Redeemer! And when we know and taſte of his redeeming love, how can we then forbear to be thankful? ſince he has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy, we cannot be ſilent in his praiſes: we muſt ſpeak of them. He has been ſo good and gracious to us, that it would be acting againſt our own ſenſe and feeling, if we did not praiſe his holy name: for we were in vile ſlavery to ſin, and he redeemed us—we were in cruel captivity to ſatan, and he redeemed us—we were under the power of death temporal and eternal, and he redeemed us. And can we poſſibly forget how miſerable we were in ourſelves, and yet how happy we are become in the Redeemer? and while we remember this, what muſt we be, if ever we ceaſe to give him thanks and praiſes? He was to us a moſt bleſſed and moſt loving Redeemer: for that he, whom all the heavenly hoſt adore, would vouchſafe to look down with pity upon our wretched ſtate, and would deſcend from the throne of his eternal glory to viſit us vile ſinners---ſlaves---and captives---nay, would become our brother, our neareſt kinſman, that he might be our lawful Redeemer---nay more,

would

would come to ſuffer and to die for his own rebellious creatures; this was the moſt wonderful condeſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus. And ought it not to endear him to us exceedingly? ſhould not our hearts overflow with gratitude, and our tongues inceſſantly break forth into praiſe for ſuch unmerited love? O may he raiſe our hearts, and exalt our affections from every lower object to the contemplation of his infinite love! There never was, nor is to be, any love like our Redeemer's to us; happy are we, if there be no love in our breaſts, like what we bear to him! The love of our God, coming from heaven, taking our nature, obeying and ſuffering in it, bleeding and dying upon the croſs to redeem us ---us miſerable vile ſinners, here is all that we can admire, here is all that we can adore. Jeſus our Lord claims our higheſt admiration, our loweſt adoration; ſo that his praiſes are a ſubject which can never be exhauſted: for they are to be our employment and happineſs for ever, and we become fitted for them, indeed we begin them, by our preſent thankfulneſs. O thou almighty Saviour, make us daily more and more thankful, that by the continual exerciſe of thankſgiving upon earth, we may be prepared to ſing the praiſes of our redeeming God for ever and ever.

The next motive mentioned in the 3d verſe, is peculiar to us heathen nations, viz. that Chriſt

Chriſt " hath redeemed us and gathered us " out of all lands, from the eaſt, and from the " weſt, from the north, and from the ſouth." If any thing can inſpire us with gratitude, this motive ſhould prevail, becauſe we cannot but feel the force of it, as it reminds us of that miſery, from which we in particular were redeemed. The Gentiles had wandered from God, and were ſo loſt and bewildered in the mazes of error and ſuperſtition, that nothing but the almighty love of our Lord Jeſus could have gathered them together into one church. All the heathen world lay in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, until the ſun of righteouſneſs aroſe upon them with the bright beams of the goſpel: they were ignorant, immoral, idolatrous, and becauſe they had no deſire to retain God in their memory, he therefore gave them over to a reprobate mind; and then being utterly forſaken of him, they ran greedily into every kind of impurity and abominable uncleanneſs. St. Paul has given us a melancholy account of the Roman morals, at a time, when we have been taught, that polite learning flouriſhed among them in its higheſt perfection. Read this firſt chapter to the Romans, and you will find that they were monſters of impiety, although they could write with all the elegance and beauty of claſſical learning. And the reſt of the heathen nations were not indeed ſo corrupt, but they were ſunk as low

in ignorance and ſuperſtition as the Romans, and particularly our anceſtors in this iſland, who were poor blind idolators; they uſed to worſhip ſtocks and ſtones, and to fall down before trees and groves. And when the face of the whole earth was thus covered with the dark night of idolatry and immorality, then it pleaſed God to ſend the day ſpring from on high to viſit us. Our bleſſed Redeemer came to call us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light, and to gather us into the myſtical body of his church, out of all lands, from the eaſt, from the weſt, from the north, and from the ſouth. His church is the myſtical body, of which he is the head, and whoever partakes of his redemption muſt be gathered from the world into this myſtical body, and muſt be ſo united, as to become a true living member of it. It was foretold by Moſes—that unto Chriſt ſhould the gathering of the people be—he was to gather the diſperſed into one body. And the prophet Iſaiah declares—" the Lord God which gathereth the " out-caſts of Iſrael ſaith, yet will I gather others " to him: for I will gather all nations and " tongues, and they ſhall come and ſee my " glory." Happy for us, theſe propheſies are now fulfilled. The love of our gracious Redeemer hath gathered ſome out of all nations and tongues: and bleſſed be his holy name for that he is daily gathering more, who come to

Chriſt, and ſee his glory, and are thankful. O that more of the people were daily gathered unto him! we ought to pray earneſtly for it, becauſe there is no ſalvation for them, who are not gathered into his myſtical body, and united as cloſely to it, as the branches of a vine are to the ſtock upon which they grow: for I am the vine, ſays the Redeemer himſelf, ye are the branches---abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

From hence it is evident, that our bleſſed Redeemer has a myſtical body, into which all the redeemed are gathered, and in which they are living members, united to their ſovereign head, enlivened by his grace, and actuated and influenced by his good Spirit, and where the Spirit of Chriſt is, there is liberty—a liberty from error—a liberty from ſin and ſatan---a liberty from death and the grave, ſo that in theliberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, there is full and plenteous redemption. And can perſons who partake of this redemption forbear to be thankful? it is impoſſible. While they have a lively ſenſe of the Redeemer's love, they muſt be ſpeaking his praiſes; and they will retain this lively ſenſe, ſo long as they remember from whence he redeemed them. When they lay diſperſed he gathered them, when they lay in ignorance, he enlightened them. When they were in the groſſeſt

idolatry, he converted them to the worſhip of the true God. When they were in the ſink of ſin and immorality, he brought them into the ways of righteouſneſs, pardoning their paſt offences, by his merits; and enabling them by his grace to proceed in the work of ſanctification: and having thus gathered them together, he united them to himſelf, and made them living members of his myſtical body; and in this happy union, how many ſpiritual comforts and bleſſings muſt they find? their hearts will certainly overflow with love and gratitude to their moſt adorable Redeemer, and it will be to them indeed a joyful and pleaſant thing to be thankful: for he claims all their affections—they would live only to him—and therefore it would be really offering them violence to hinder them from ſpeaking of him with the mouth, what the heart feels. He is ſo much the delight of their ſouls, that they had rather ceaſe to breath, than ceaſe to be thankful to their deareſt Lord and Saviour. Daily will they be telling the wonders of his redemption, and giving thanks and honour unto him, ſo long as they have any being. And

May God enable every one of us to join our hearts and voices with theirs in giving praiſe and honour to our redeeming Lord. And having finiſhed the paraphraſe upon the three verſes of the text, I come now to call upon you to join your thankſgiving with all the other members

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of Chriſt's myſtical body. You have heard what the duty is, it conſiſts in the ſervice of a grateful heart, which is perfectly ſenſible of the divine love—having not only experienced God's goodneſs, but alſo his mercy, even the eternal mercy of the covenant of grace, being redeemed from the ſlavery of ſin, from the captivity of ſatan, and from the power of death, and theſe redeemed of the Lord cannot but ſpeak with gratitude of what he has done for their ſouls, eſpecially ſuch of the redeemed, who were gathered out of all lands, who were ſcattered and alienated from God by ſin, were in heathen idolatrous countries, out of the covenant of promiſe, and without hope in the world—when ſuch perſons are made to partake of the bleſſings of redemption, how will their hearts burn within them? how will their affections be fired, and with what a pure flame will the ſweet incenſe of their thanſgiving aſcend up before God? certainly their ſenſe of this redemption will fill their ſouls with love and praiſe: for they will find themſelves ſo happy in giving thanks to the God of all mercies, that the bent of their minds will always turn to this duty. It will become their perfect delight and joy to be employed in this part of devotion, which is by far the ſweeteſt: for when an heart full of praiſe and gratitude pours out its adoration and thanks to its God and Saviour---Oh! how delightful muſt this devotion

votion be? and when grace heightens it and fires and inflames our hearts with the ardour of divine love---Oh! how heavenly muſt this devotion be? it is indeed the higheſt to which we can ariſe, while we are in the body, and it muſt certainly be the moſt pleaſing and grateful, becauſe it is the devotion of heaven itſelf. It is the very ſervice of that innumerable company of ſaints and angels, who ſtand around the Redeemer's throne, and join their hearts and voices in heavenly harmony, giving thanks, and honour, and praiſe unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever. And muſt not this be a moſt ſweet and delightful duty, which makes up a great part of the enjoyment and happineſs of the bleſſed in heaven? doubtleſs it muſt even here be exceedingly ſweet to thoſe perſons, who hope to find themſelves happy for ever in the practice of it. So that whoever has the true chriſtian temper will be always giving thanks to his redeeming Lord, and will always, in ſo doing find ſomething of that pure delight and joy, which the glorified Spirits in heaven find, while they ſing the praiſes of their redeeming God.

O let us then lift up our hearts, and join our voices with theirs! may we catch ſome of thoſe heavenly ſtrains, with which they inceſſantly celebrate Jeſus their moſt adorable Redeemer. And if we can catch ſome of their fire, we

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ſhall then feel what kind of joy it is to be truly and ſincerely thankful to our bleſſed Lord. O may the ſpirit of grace elevate and exalt our affections, and raiſe them to that high pitch of thankſgiving, which may endear the duty to us, and make us in love with it ſo long as we live. God grant he may, that my application may come with more power to your hearts, and I ſhall addreſs it to two different ſorts of perſons. And

Firſt, There may perhaps be ſome among you, who allow thankſgiving to be a pleaſant duty, but yet you find in yourſelves no diſpoſition to practice it. After what has been ſaid of the Redeemer's love to men, O it is a cutting reflection to hear, that any of you ſhould be in this cold dead ſtate. Would to God there was not one man upon earth, much leſs any one in this place, ſo inſenſible of our Lord's mercy! but if ſuch there be, the holy Spirit calls upon them in the text attentively to view what Chriſt has done for his people. The bleſſings of his redemption are ſufficient, not only to awake them that are aſleep, but alſo to raiſe up the dead in ſin: for conſider, he redeemed them from thoſe enemies who had them in vile ſubjection and bondage. They were ſold in ſin, in ſlavery to their own natural luſts and appetites---captives to ſatan, who treated them cruelly, putting

ting them upon thoſe miſerable labours, wherein they could work out nothing but their own damnation---and ſin and ſatan had delivered them over to it, putting them in the power of death, temporal and eternal. Such was their wretched condition. And do you believe it, or not? if you do not, you oppoſe God, and his holy word, and every day's experience. If you do believe it, why are you not thankful for redemption? there can be but one reaſon, and that is, you have as yet no ſhare in the mercies of the Redeemer. You know not your intereſt in him: for if you did, it would be as natural to offer him thankſgiving, as it is to breathe: and ſo long as you withhold it from him, you are indeed in ſlavery and captivity, although you may not feel enough of your miſery to make you wiſh for redemption. Sin and ſatan have ſo deluded you, that you chooſe to continue ſlaves and captives to them, rather than to be ſet at liberty by Jeſus Chriſt. And having no deſire to find an intereſt in his redemption, you have therefore no diſpoſition to be thankful to him for it. This is a moſt dangerous ſtate: and may the eternal Spirit open your eyes, and ſhew you the danger of it, that you may flee for your life to the God of all mercy and forgiveneſs, and may find abundant reaſon to be thankful for his redeeming love!

But I would hope there are very few of you thus indiſpoſed to the practice of thankſgiving, and therefore I turn myſelf with joy to thoſe, who are diſpoſed and willing to be thankful. You have heard (my chriſtian brethren) of the infinite love and mercy of your bleſſed Saviour, and how by his free graee he redeemed you from the hand of the enemy, and gathered you out of all lands into his myſtical body. When you were ſold ſlaves to ſin, captives to ſatan, and given over to the power of death, then your God vouchſafed to beeome man to redeem you; he took your fleſh, for the law required that the next relation, and he only, ſhould be the Redeemer; he was made neareſt to you in blood, that he might fulfil the character of a lawful Redeemer. The almighty God, the ereator of all things, beeame your brother. O aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! and he paid down the full price for your redemption, and he paid it with joy, although he bled, and laid down his life for payment. But ſuch was the infinite value and merit of his moſt preeious blood, that it redeemed us from ſlavery, redeemed us from eaptivity, redeemed us from the power of death. It obtained for us the moſt full and plenteous redemption, even redemption from all the evils of ſin in this world, and redemption to all the joys of the next world, for ever and ever. And finding yourſelves

yourſelves thus redeemed from the preſent evils of ſin, and entitled to the future joys of heaven, how can you forbear to give thanks to this moſt bleſſed Redeemer? while you find his graces and comforts in your ſouls, you cannot ceaſe praiſing him: I hope your praiſes will never ceaſe, but it will be your joy and delight in time, as it is to be your happineſs to eternity, to give honour and glory to the lamb who was ſlain, and has redeemed you unto God by his blood. It has been the ſubject and deſign of this diſcourſe to bring you into this thankful frame and temper of mind. And if you are thankful, if you do but deſire to be thankful, you will readily join your hearts with mine, in our requeſts to God, to make us more thankful, ſaying,

O moſt adorable God and Saviour, we beſeech thee to ſend thy bleſſing upon what we have heard this day out of thy holy word. Endue it with thy power and efficacy, that it may reach our hearts, and may be the means of making us more thankful to thee. And give us grace, bleſſed Lord, to grow and improve in thankfulneſs, and let thy praiſes become more and more our delight. And to that end be pleaſed to let us know our intereſt in thy great redemption, that we all may now praiſe thee with joyful lips, and may join our thankſgiving with angels and archangels, and with all the company

pany of heaven, to laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praiſing thee and ſaying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hoſts, heaven and earth are full of the glory of thy redemption: glory be to thee for it, O Jeſu Chriſt, with the Father and the holy Spirit, to whom be equal honour, worſhip, and praiſe, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

PSALM CVII. 4—10.

They wandered in the wilderneſs in a ſolitary way, they found no city to dwell in, hungry and thirſty, their ſoul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes: and he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men: for he ſatisfieth the longing ſoul, and filleth the hungry ſoul with goodneſs.

THE general ſubject of this ſacred hymn is thankſgiving—the motives to induce us to be thankful are taken from the mercies of redemption. And this redemption is here conſidered in ſeveral views, according to the ſeveral diſtreſſes from which we are redeemed, and each of theſe is uſed as a freſh motive to heighten our gratitude, and to inſpire us with more praiſe to Jeſus, our moſt adorable God and Redeemer.

In the laſt lecture I conſidered the three firſt verſes, from which it appeared that the redeemed of the Lord were the perſons here called upon to be thankful: they were redeemed from the hand

hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands from the eaſt, and from the weſt, from the north, and from the ſouth, and while they had any ſenſe of theſe great bleſſings, they would never be ſilent in his praiſes, who had been to them an almighty deliverer. The holy Spirit, ſpeaking of the ſame perſons in the ſame circumſtances, offers them another motive for thankfulneſs, in the words which I have read. It is a clear and convincing argument, and I hope the inſpirer of it will carry it with conviction to your hearts. He knew what was the moſt proper method to affect us, and he will certainly accompany his own methods with his own grace. And therefore every one of you may expect to reap that profit from this ſcripture, which the holy Spirit intended it ſhould be the means of conveying to the faithful, if you put yourſelves under his guidance and ſeek his bleſſing, while I am

Firſt, Going through a paraphraſe upon the words, and then

Secondly, Applying them as a motive to inſpire you with thankfulneſs.

And firſt, The words relate to the redeemed, and deſcribe the ſtate, which they were in, before they partook of the bleſſings of redemption: before they were gathered together out of all lands, and admitted into the flock of the great ſhepherd and biſhop of ſouls, they wandered in

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the wilderneſs, where they were neither fed in green paſtures, nor led forth beſide the waters of comfort. Their ſpiritual ſtate was ſo much like the natural condition of a dry barren wilderneſs, that the ſcriptures commonly deſcribe it by this name. Ezekiel calls it the wilderneſs of the people, the deſolate ſtate of the heathen people, and not of the country---and the prophet Iſaiah foretells the happy change of this deſolated ſtate of the heathen people, when the holy Spirit ſhould be poured upon them (xxxii. 15.) " until " the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, " and the wilderneſs be a fruitful field." When the abundant ſtreams of his grace ſhould deſcend upon the heathen world, then the wilderneſs and the ſolitary place ſhould be glad, and the deſart ſhould rejoice and bloſſom as the roſe --it ſhould bloſſom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and ſinging. But before this bleſſed change was made, we were all in a waſte howling wilderneſs, where, the Pſalmiſt ſays, we wandered in a ſolitary way, for by ſin we had loſt the way to heaven. All fleſh---the whole human nature, ſays Moſes, had corrupted his way upon earth--- and this corruption ſoon diſcovers itſelf, and breaks out very early in life, for the prophet declares, that as ſoon as they are born they go aſtray, and when they grow up, they have no power to return into the right way ; but are like loſt ſheep, which can never of themſelves find

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the way back again into the fold, after they have once ſtrayed from it. And therefore, in the 53d, of Iſaiah, our wretched condition is repreſented by this image--All we, not one of us excepted—all we like ſheep have gone aſtray---we had wandered from the fold of the church, had ſtrayed from the true ſhepherd, and got out of his pleaſant and fruitful paſtures into the deſolate wilderneſs, where we had loſt ourſelves, and could find no way out of it, and no food in it: for while all the heathen world wandered in this ſolitary wilderneſs, they were hungry and thirſty, even to ſuch a degree, that their ſoul fainted in them: for want of food their ſtrength began to fail them, and they were even hard at death's door.

Now if you conſider the propriety of this image only in its natural light, it is very ſtriking, though it be very familiar. Suppoſe a perſon to be travelling through ſome deſolate uninhabited country, like the deſarts of Arabia, and unhappily to loſe his way, and after wandering for ſome days, all his proviſion being gone, his ſpirits and his ſtrength fail him, hunger and thirſt begin to prey upon his vitals, and no hope of deliverance from any human means appearing, his ſoul really faints in him, and he gives himſelf up to deſpair. Is not this a ſcene of exquiſite diſtreſs, and ſuch as a perſon of the leaſt tenderneſs cannot behold without being greatly

greatly moved with pity? for this miſerable traveller cannot ſupport himſelf much longer; his diſſolution is drawing nigh; he already ſinks under the fatigues of mind and body, and famine will ſoon put an end to his wretched life. And if you ſhould happen to be paſſing by this way, ſoon after the breath was gone out of his body, and ſhould ſee his ghaſtly appearance, how pale and emaciated, and frightful his dead corpſe looked, then your heart would melt over him, and you could not avoid ſhedding one compaſſionate tear. But how much more ſenſibly would his death affect you, if you begun to be apprehenſive of this ſame danger; if you had alſo loſt your way, were without food, your ſpirits and ſtrength failing, and ſcarce any hopes left of your finding the right way again? When you thus made his caſe your own, your concern would be double, and you would be in the utmoſt diſtreſs for your own ſafety, ſeeing before your eyes an unhappy fellow creature, who periſhed in the ſame circumſtances.

Now if this caſe, which is only a temporal calamity, and to which death will put an end, would naturally move our pity, and excite our compaſſion, how much more ſhould the ſame caſe in ſpirituals affect us? becauſe here the calamity is endleſs, and death does not finiſh, but rather is an entrance and opening into eternal diſtreſs; ſo that if the caſe in common life moved

moved you greatly, then this in ſpiritual life ſhould move you infinitely more. Call up then the ſofteſt emotions of your tenderneſs, and compaſſion, and mourn over that unhappy perſon, whoſe ſpiritual miſery is painted out and repreſented by the loſt, ſtarving, and dying traveller in the wilderneſs. You may ſee from what his body ſuffers, how much the ſoul of the poor helpleſs ſinner is to ſuffer, who has loſt the way to heaven, and who wanders in ſearch of it without any guide or direction, and after all his labour and pains to find it out, wearied and hungry, and fainting for thirſt, he is forced to give over the ſearch: his ſoul is ready to periſh, for want of the divine ſupport, and of the ſtreams of divine grace, which Chriſt and the holy Spirit only can give, and which are as neceſſary to the life of the ſoul, as meat and drink are to the life of the body. And if none be ſoon ſent to this loſt ſinner he dies, not only to this world, but he alſo dies from God, and from all the glories of the heavenly kingdom—he is eternally ruined and undone. Here then is an object a thouſand times more miſerable, than the poor traveller who periſhed in the wilderneſs. And can you behold, how it is poſſible for you (my brethren) to think of this infinitely more miſerable object, and not to be infinitely more affected with it? doubtleſs every one among you, who can feel for others, and has any bowels of com-

paſſion in him, muſt mourn over this unhappy man, who is juſt falling into torments, which know no intermiſſion---no end. Oh! it is a dreadful caſe, beyond deſcription diſtreſsful---God grant you may never know what it is, to be tormented for ever and ever in the flames of hell. And if you can thus pity another perſon in this diſtreſs, O ſhut not up the bowels of your compaſſion againſt your own ſelves: for this is indeed your own caſe. You are this very loſt ruined ſinner. Every one of you is, every ſon of Adam is, in this wilderneſs---in it you have loſt your way to heaven, and with the beſt of your natural abilities and reaſoning powers cannot find it again: or if you could find it, yet you are not able to walk in it, becauſe you are dying of hunger and thirſt, whether you feel it or not: for you have no food from Chriſt, who ſays, I am the bread of life, to ſupport your ſinful ſouls, and therefore you muſt periſh with hunger, and you have no grace from the holy Spirit, which is the water of life, and therefore you muſt periſh with thirſt. This is by nature the condition of every man who cometh into the world---and whoever thou art, who haſt not ſeen thy ſelf in this condition, thou art ſtill in the waſte and howling wilderneſs. Although the body may lodge in a palace, yet thy poor ſoul is in a deſart: for if thou haſt not yet found thy loſt eſtate, thou haſt not yet taken one ſtep toward thy recovery. If thou haſt

not ſeen and felt thy miſery---that thou haſt loſt thy way to heaven, and haſt no merit to ſupport thee, no grace to ſanctify thee; if thou haſt not ſeen this, Oh miſerable man, thou art blind indeed. Thou art under the ſtrongeſt deluſion of ſin, which ſhews its power over thee, by thus obſcuring and darkening all the faculties of the ſoul. But if it ſhould pleaſe God to open thine eyes, thou wouldſt, to thy amazement, ſee nothing around thee, but a waſte barren wilderneſs, where thou now fancieſt nature to be flouriſhing and fruitful. And may his good Spirit indeed enlighten your underſtandings, and ſhew you evidently your miſerable ſtate, that there may be raiſed in your hearts a ſtrong cry for deliverance. And if you find any prayer, if it be but a deſire, riſing in your minds, to accept of full and free redemption through Jeſus Chriſt, hear how comfortably the holy Spirit exhorts you to apply to him in your diſtreſs, as it follows in the 6th verſe, "Then they "cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he "delivered them out of their diſtreſſes." They were in the wilderneſs, had loſt their way, had no food, were periſhing, they could only cry unto the Lord; they had no help or hope left, but throwing themſelves upon his mercy to pray him to interpoſe in their behalf. When miſery brings us thus to know and feel our wretchedneſs, then our deliverance draweth nigh: for God is always more ready to help, than we are to pray

to him for help. And we cannot have a happier proof of his readineſs to help, than in his ſending us thoſe troubles, which ſend us to him, and which thereby bring us deliverance. And we have great reaſon to be thankful unto him, and to kiſs the rod, whenever its chaſtiſements diſpoſe us to ſeek his face. "I will go and return "to my place," ſays the God of all mercy, in the prophet Hoſea v. 15. "till they acknow-"ledge their offence, and ſeek my face, in their "affliction they will ſeek me early." How full is this paſſage of the moſt tender love and affection? you ſee our God ſends affliction, even to his enemies, with a deſign to do them good; he ſuffers them to fall into diſtreſſes, from which the arm of fleſh cannot deliver them, that they may be brought to acknowledge their offence, and to ſeek his face, who is almighty to deliver. And whenever outward ſufferings produce this inward humiliation, then the deſign of them is anſwered; for then the mind is rightly diſpoſed to look up to heaven, from whence only cometh help in time of need. And they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, they ſaw the miſery of their fallen ſtate---they felt their guilt and wretchedneſs---they found no help in the wilderneſs of this world---and deeply abaſed and thoroughly humbled with the ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs, they cried unto the Lord for help: and Jeſus heard them. The God of love heard the firſt ſigh of

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their broken hearts, and before they cried unto him, he was at hand to ſave. He is an almighty Saviour, whoſe love is as infinite as his power---he is always ready to ſave unto the uttermoſt. Whoever ſeek ſhall find his grace, either to ſhew him his guilt and miſery, or effectually to remove them. And if any of you are now ſenſible of guilt and miſery, make a trial of his redeeming love. Go to him with the ſincere deſires of your hearts to be pardoned and ſaved, and he will as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as he will reject you. He will not caſt you out. He ſhed his blood for you on the croſs---he loved you more than his own life---he even died to ſave you, and he cannot caſt you out. If you deſire him to ſave you, you are ſaved: for they cried unto the Lord Jeſus, and he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes---they had nothing to offer him but prayers and intreaties---they could only cry for pardon and mercy---this is all that they could do, and all that he wants: for ſo ſoon as they cried for ſalvation, he ſaved them. His free grace led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. They could not help themſelves---they could only cry for help---and ſo ſoon as they cried to him, his free-grace brought them a complete deliverance: for whereas they had loſt their way, he brought them forth by the right way: his good ſpirit led them out of the wilderneſs unto him, who calls himſelf the way,

the truth, and the life, and in him they found an abiding city, whoſe builder and maker is God: this city is the church, which Chriſt hath purchaſed with his own blood, and whoever is admitted into it, and is a true living member of it, can want no manner of thing that is good: for Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer, the head of the church, has provided every thing that can make his members happy in time and to eternity. In time they have his good Spirit to enlighten them, and to ſhew them the way out of the wilderneſs, his merits to juſtify them, his grace to ſanctify them, they are holy and happy, and in eternity they will enjoy theſe heavenly bleſſings, to which they have already a ſure right and title by the merits and free grace of Jeſus Chriſt. And

When ſuch perſons remember, what they formerly were in themſelves, and what they are now made in him, how can they forbear to be thankful? how can the redeemed of the Lord be ſilent in the praiſes of the Redeemer; when they conſider out of what a deſolate wilderneſs he brought them, when they were loſt and bewildered in it, were ſo hungry and thirſty, that their ſoul fainted in them, muſt not the very remembrance of theſe bleſſings inſpire them with thankfulneſs? when nothing but death and endleſs ruin lay before them, he was pleaſed of his own free grace to hear the very firſt cry, which they ſent up to him for deliverance, and

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he came with all the tender mercies of our God to ſave them. He turned the wilderneſs into a paradiſe---he put his revealed directions into their hands, and ſent his good Spirit into their hearts to enlighten them, and to lead them into the right way---he gave them the bread of life to allay their hunger, and the waters of grace and comfort to quench their thirſt---and having thus bleſſed them with all ſpiritual bleſſings, how can they--how is it poſſible they ſhould be ſilent in his praiſes? while their hearts are full of gratitude to him, ſhall they not be telling with their mouths of the wonders which he hath done for their ſalvation? doubtleſs, they will be ſpeaking of their moſt adorable Redeemer all the day long: for this is ſo juſt a tribute of praiſe, it is ſo eaſy and pleaſant a return; and beſides, it is the only return we can make for his ineſtimable bleſſings; that this they will and muſt make him. And this is the grateful return which the holy Spirit calls upon us, in the next words, to make to our redeeming God---" O that men would therefore " praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his " wonderful works to the children of men." He has done wonders indeed---he never failed in the miraculous bleſſings of his free grace, O that we may never fail in thankfulneſs for them. But certain it is, that we have all failed, and the beſt of us lament our failing the moſt: for thankful, as he deſerves, none of us are. It is a rule

rule of common life, that thankfulneſs ſhould be proportioned to the benefits received, and whoever does not act up to this rule is reckoned baſely ungrateful among men. In religion the ſame rule is juſt and equitable. But becauſe Chriſt has been ſo infinitely merciful, that our thankfulneſs cannot be proportioned to the merits received, yet we are therefore more inexcuſable, if we are not as grateful as it is poſſible for us to be: for to whom men give much, of them they always require the more; and to whom Chriſt has forgiven much, of them he requires the more love and praiſe. The more we receive, the greater is our debt, and to conſider that we can never repay it, ſhould moſt effectually ſtir us up to be thankful. Oh! how earneſtly ſhould we pray for, how inceſſantly ſhould we be ſeeking the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to enable us to riſe to higher degrees of gratitude. His merits will be ſtill above our praiſes, let us riſe ever ſo high; but let us not ſtop, until the heart be full of thankfulneſs, and every faculty of the mind and body be ready to give honour and glory to their redeeming God. "O that men would therefore praiſe "the Lord Jeſus for his mercies, and declare "the wonders which he hath done for the ſal-"vation of men: for he ſatisfieth the longing "ſoul, and filleth the hungry ſoul with goodneſs." In theſe laſt words you ſee, how the prophet exalts

exalts the free grace of God in order to raiſe and exalt your gratitude: for theſe ſinful loſt travellers in the wilderneſs could do nothing to deliver themſelves---they had tried every thing in their power, and could not ſucceed---they were helpleſs---faint---and miſerable---they have only ſpirits enow left to cry unto God. And what haſte does mercy make? for the moment they cry, Jeſus was at hand to ſave. The God of love came with all the bleſſings of his redeeming grace, and poured them plentifully upon theſe poor ſinners, when he had made them ſenſible of their want of them, and they applied to him for relief. For he ſatisfieth the longing ſoul---the longing ſoul is that which finds itſelf empty---which is convinced of its nothingneſs and wretchedneſs, and ſo ſoon as it can confeſs itſelf to be quite deſtitute of every ſaving grace, does indeed hunger and thirſt after the graces of Jeſus Chriſt, then he never fails to ſatisfy this empty ſoul, and to fill this hungry ſoul with goodneſs. Such is Jeſus the God of our ſalvation, and thus wonderful is he in his mercies to the children of men! O that they would therefore praiſe him for his infinite, his eternal mercies---and grant, O bleſſed Jeſus, that many perſons, who hear me this day, may have reaſon to praiſe thee. Bring them by thy grace, O almighty Redeemer, out of the wilderneſs of ſin and error, and let this ſcripture be fulfilled

fulfilled in every one of us, that we may join in giving thanks to thy holy name now and for ever.

Thus much for the paraphraſe upon the words; they contain a brief hiſtory of man's fall and miſery, and of his reſtoration through Jeſus Chriſt; which are deſcribed under theſe particulars.

Firſt, The loſt ſtate of men by nature.

Secondly, they are brought to a right ſenſe of it, and cry to the Lord Jeſus for deliverance.

Thirdly, he hears them and delivers them out of all their diſtreſſes. And

Fourthly, the tribute of thanks due to him for this great deliverance.

To each of theſe points I will ſpeak, as briefly as I can, by way of ſpiritual uſe and application. And firſt the loſt ſtate of men by nature is here repreſented under the ſtriking images of perſons, who have loſt their way in a barren wilderneſs, where they are ready to periſh with fatigue and famine. Now, my brethren, let me put this plain queſtion to you, and may God put it to your hearts---have you ever ſeen yourſelves in this loſt ſtate? If you have, give glory and thanks to Jeſus your almighty Redeemer. If you have not, you are in the utmoſt danger, and yet you live ſecure---you are ſtill in your ſins, with all the guilt of them about you, and de-

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ſtruction lies before you---you are on the very precipice---in one moment you may fall into eternity---where nothing but endleſs torments can be your portion: and what a ſtrong deluſion of ſin is it, that you, who fear and dread a little bodily pain in this life, ſhould not be under the leaſt apprehenſion about the endleſs pains of body and ſoul in the next life? what is able thus to infatuate you againſt your own reaſon and your ſenſes? you have not ſurely perſuaded yourſelves, that the account which the Pſalmiſt gives of your ſinful miſerable ſtate is not matter of fact? if you have fallen into this deluſion, hear what the word of God, and the voice of reaſon, and the ſad experience of every day, loudly bear witneſs. The ſcripture is clear, that all we, every ſon of Adam, all we like ſheep have gone aſtray---we have ſtrayed from the paradiſe of God into the wilderneſs of this ſinful world: and further the ſcripture teaches, that they are all gone out of the way---all---not one excepted, "they are all gone out of the way, they are all-"together become abominable, there is alſo "none that doeth good, no not one." And the conſequence of our wandering is thus deſcribed, ---"deſtruction and miſery are in their ways, "and the way of peace have they not known." The ſenſe and meaning of theſe paſſages you will not diſpute, their authority you do not deny: and how then can you reſiſt their evidence, ſince the

the reaſon of mankind, Jews, Heathens, and Chriſtians, confirms it, and every day's melancholy experience renders it more clear and ſelf-evident? if you will not believe this cloud of witneſſes, you muſt believe nothing: for you may as well doubt, whether there are any ſuch beings as men, as whether they be fallen ſinful beings. The one is an object of ſenſe, as much as the other. And therefore unleſs you have taken your reſt in abſolute ſcepticiſm, and are quite ſettled upon the lees and dregs of infidelity, you muſt allow that mankind are ſinful and miſerable. Sin is the parent of all their miſery: for it ſeparates them from God, who is the parent of all good. It ſeparates them in this world from his grace, and it will ſeparate them in the next world from his glory for ever and ever. And now (my brethren) being convinced of your loſt ſtate and ſinful condition, what do you reſolve to do in conſequence of this conviction? will you go away from hence with this conviction upon your minds, and ſin on as ſecurely as you did before? God forbid. Your guilt would then be increaſed, your caſe would grow more deſperate, you would then chooſe miſery---even eternal miſery, with your eyes open. O what a dreadful infatuation would this be! may the Lord Jeſus keep you from it, and may his heavenly grace ſecond my intreaties, that you may now---this very moment, ſee your loſt ſtate by nature, and

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cry out unto him in the anguiſh of your ſouls for his grace! and if it be but a deep ſigh from the heart, or a ſhort prayer, Lord Jeſus ſave, or elſe we periſh---this the God of love will hear, and anſwer. For it follows in the next words of the text, "when they cried unto the Lord in their "trouble, then he delivered them out of their "diſtreſſes." They could do no more to deliver themſelves, than you can do; they could only cry to him in prayer to ſave them, and according to the greatneſs of his mercies he freely gave them full redemption. This is the eſtabliſhed method of his proceeding. So ſoon as he ſent his grace to ſhew them their wretchedneſs, and to diſpoſe them to cry to him for deliverance, he was ready and able to ſave them to the uttermoſt; and he is now as ready and as able to deal thus graciouſly with you. If you cry unto him for help, he will ſave. How ſweetly does he invite, how powerfully does he perſuade you now to cry aloud for his redeeming grace. "Call upon me, ſays he, in the day of trouble, "ſo will I hear thee, and thou ſhalt praiſe me." Therefore now call upon him, let the ſenſe of your guilt and miſery now make you earneſt and importunate in your requeſts---call upon him in the day of trouble, and what an encouragement does he give you to perſevere---So I will hear thee---I ſhed my blood for thy guilt, and my grace is almighty to remove thy miſery---only

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ſeek them in prayer and I will hear and anſwer, and thou ſhalt praiſe me---thou ſhalt have reaſon to praiſe me for the abundant mercies of my free and full redemption. O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord Jeſus, &c.

I have been very ſhort upon the three laſt particulars in the text, viz. the ſenſe which theſe ſinners had of their miſery, their crying for deliverance, and the tribute of thanks due to Chriſt for delivering them, becauſe I ſhall have frequent occaſion to ſpeak upon them in the following parts of the Pſalm. But enough I hope has been ſaid to lay open this moſt ſweet and comfortable portion of ſcripture, and to warm your hearts with the conſideration of it. You ſee that the mercies of our God are above our miſery. Though by nature we wander like ſheep in the barren wilderneſs of this world, yet we have a moſt tender ſhepherd, who is always ſeeking to bring us back into the fruitful paſtures of his church. Though in this wilderneſs we can find no abiding city, yet within the fold and pale of his church, we may find reſt unto our ſouls. Though we have no ſpiritual ſupport in ourſelves, yet his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, and when his good Spirit applies the merits of them to our hearts, then we have true ſpiritual life abiding in us. Though our ſouls fainted within us, while we wandered in the wilderneſs, yet Jeſus

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the God of all conſolation will refreſh the fainting ſoul with his reviving grace, and will ſupply it with every manner of thing that is good through the ages of eternity. So that he is more merciful than we are miſerable---and in this reſpect his mercies are over all his works, for that he only waits until we have ſeen our miſery, and are humbled enough to cry to him for relief, and then he ſhews he is at hand, a God to ſave. O that you may all this day experience his almighty power, and have freſh proof of his redeeming love---and every one of you who deſires it, will readily join with me in requeſting his bleſſing on what you have now heard.

O moſt mighty God and Saviour, we acknowledge and confeſs our loſt eſtate by nature: for all men have wandered in the wilderneſs out of the way, and have found no abiding city---they could find no way out of the wilderneſs---no place to reſt, and no food to ſupport them in it, hungry and thirſty their ſouls fainted in them--- But ſo ſoon as the ſenſe of their miſery diſpoſed them to cry to thee, bleſſed Jeſus, thou waſt ready to deliver them out of all their diſtreſſes. Now almighty Lord deliver us, and extend the ſame mercies to this whole congregation---and let not one perſon among them leave this place, without being firſt convinced of his own miſery, and then of thy all-ſufficiency to redeem him from it. Bring what has been ſaid upon theſe truths

truths home to all our hearts, and carry it with thy divine power and efficacy to our conſciences, that we may now cry to thee with one voice---Lord Jeſus ſave, or elſe we periſh. Hear us thou God of Love, and be unto us an almighty Saviour, that we may bleſs thee with grateful hearts, for having brought us up this day out of the wilderneſs of the world, here to the houſe of the Lord---where we found reaſon to be thankful as long as we live, and to declare the wonders which thou haſt done for our ſalvation. Grant this, O moſt adorable Jeſus, to the glory of God the Father, and by the influence of the holy Spirit, upon all our hearts, now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen.*

SERMON IV.

PSALM CVII. 10---17.

Such as ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, becauſe they rebelled againſt the words of God, and condemned the counſel of the moſt high: Therefore he brought down their heart with labour, they fell down and there was none to help; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he ſaved them out of their diſtreſſes; he brought them out of darkneſs and out of the ſhadow of death, and brake their bonds in ſunder. O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! for he hath broken the gates of braſs and cut the bars of iron in ſunder.

THE holy Spirit ſets before us in theſe words a ſecond image of our miſery by nature. He has called upon the redeemed of the Lord to be thankful to Jeſus the God of their redemption, and in order to exalt and raiſe their thankfulneſs the more, he gives them four images, in which the miſery of fallen man is placed in different views. In the firſt he is repreſented as loſt in a wilderneſs, where after much wandering and wearineſs, fainting with hunger and thirſt, he is

juſt ready to periſh. But finding no help upon earth, and being brought to a deep ſenſe of his diſtreſs, he cries unto the Lord in his trouble, and Jeſus was at hand to ſave: for ſo ſoon as the ſinner was diſpoſed to accept, the Saviour was willing to beſtow, free and full redemption. This was the ſubject of the laſt lecture. We have in the words before us a ſecond image of man's fallen condition, in which the diſtreſſes of it are greatly heightened, and if I were able to paint the exquiſite miſery of it, ſo that you might ſee it in a ſtrong light, it could not fail of having a great influence upon every unconverted perſon. I will therefore endeavour to ſet it before your eyes in as ſtriking colours, as I am able, and I hope the ſame good Spirit who inſpired this paſſage will be pleaſed to accompany us this day in the conſideration of it, and to ſupply the imperfections of my diſcourſe by his divine grace in your hearts. O eternal Spirit now preſide over us, and ſhew thyſelf to be a God, by applying the doctrine with power and energy to every one of our conſciences, while I am

Firſt, Laying open the ſenſe and meaning of the words, and

Secondly, Conſidering their ſpiritual uſe and application.

It muſt be remembered, that the words belong to the redeemed of the Lord---they are the perſons

perſons called upon to be thankful---and the motives to excite their thankfulneſs are taken from a review of their miſeries and diſtreſſes, before they obtained redemption: and theſe miſeries and diſtreſſes were of ſo many various kinds, and ſo very numerous, that they could not be repreſented to the life in one picture. In order to ſet them before our eyes in full proportion, it was neceſſary to draw them in different ſcenes: and therefore the holy Spirit has given us in theſe four paintings a perfect deſcription of man's ſinful and miſerable condition by nature: in the firſt he is repreſented as having loſt the way to heaven, and wandering in a wilderneſs, weary with fatigue, faint with famine---ready to periſh---in the ſecond, his diſtreſs is heightened, for he falls into a pit of darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him into cloſe confinement, binding him with the heavy chains of affliction and iron. The ſcripture and every day's experience confirm this deſcription, for the firſt words, ſuch as ſit in darkneſs, are true of every ſon of Adam in his natural ſtate. Sin cut off all communication between God and us, and thereby rendered us quite ignorant and blind in all ſpiritual knowledge: for if the eye of the mind have no light from the eternal ſun of righteouſneſs, it is in the ſame ſtate with the eye of the body, if it have no light from the created ſun in the hea-

vens---ſo that all the ſpiritual world was covered with groſs darkneſs and blindneſs, until the light of life aroſe: for thus ſaith the Lord God, ſpeaking of Chriſt, I have given thee for a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes---to bring out the priſoners from the priſon, and them that ſit in darkneſs out of the priſon-houſe." Now it is certain, that the Gentiles, to whom Chriſt was given for a light, were not literally blind---they had good eyes, and could ſee outward objects clear enough---but the eye of the ſoul was entirely blind, inſomuch that Chriſt came down from heaven miraculouſly to open it. And he ſent out his apoſtles for the ſame purpoſe, and when he called Paul to the apoſtleſhip, he gave him his commiſſion in theſe words, "I ſend thee now unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light." You cannot ſuppoſe, that all the Gentiles were blind, to whom St. Paul was ſent, and yet they had eyes which were not open, until the goſpel enlightened them, and theſe were the eyes of the mind: for when the Gentiles were turned from darkneſs to light, then was fulfilled that which is written by the prophet Iſaiah, "the eyes of the blind ſhall ſee out of obſcurity, and out of darkneſs"---the "ſun of righteouſneſs aroſe upon their obſcurity and darkneſs, and ſo enlightened the eyes of the ſpiritually blind, that they clearly diſcovered the

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right way to heaven. And the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, were by nature in this blind ſtate; Zacharias in the goſpel confeſſes it, "The day-"ſpring, (i. e. Chriſt,) from on high hath viſited "us, to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs "and the ſhadow of death"---all mankind without Chriſt, Jews and Gentiles, not only ſit in darkneſs, but alſo in the ſhadow of death. Such is the blind and miſerable condition of ſinners! Sin has ſubjected them to temporal and to eternal death; but becauſe the death of the ſoul, when it periſhes eternally from God is not an object of ſenſe, the holy Spirit was therefore pleaſed to give us a ſhadow of it, by the death of the body, when it periſhes to this world. And both theſe kinds of death entered into the world by ſin; and what the body ſuffers by dying to this world, is indeed but a ſhadow of what the ſoul ſuffers when it dies from God in the next world. And yet it is a very juſt and expreſſive ſhadow: for as the body, when it dies, has no longer any ſenſe or perception of the outward objects of this life, but totally periſhes from the light and ſpirit of the animal world, and from all the joys and comforts which they adminiſter, ſo the ſoul, when it dies from God, has no longer any ſenſe or perception of the inward objects of its life, but totally periſhes from the eternal light and ſpirit of the heavenly world, and from all the joys and comforts which they

they adminiſter. Thus bodily death is a ſhadow of ſpiritual---and temporal of eternal. I might trace the likeneſs in more particulars, but this may ſuffice to explain what the Pſalmiſt means, by the ſhadow of death. He ſuppoſes the mortality of the body to be a ſhadow of the ſad eſtate into which ſin brought the ſoul. All mankind is ſubject to this mortality, which is but the ſhadow of death, for in the death of the body we have a mournful picture of the more miſerable death of the ſoul, which is the ſubſtance of death: this is the reality and ſubſtance of what the other is but a ſhadow. Oh what a diſtreſsful ſcene then is this! here is nothing but darkneſs and the ſhadow of death---a body mortal and periſhing, and while it lives is in bondage and the fear of death, terrified at the very approach of the ſhadow, and how much more in dread of the ſubſtance. And yet this diſtreſs is ſtill heightened, for theſe poor ſufferers are ſo chained down, that they cannot eſcape from the power of their enemies; they cannot ſtir one ſtep out of this darkneſs and ſhadow of death; becauſe they are faſt bound in affliction and iron. Sin brought us into this darkneſs and ſhadow of death, and then chained us down to theſe miſeries. The ſcripture frequently ſpeaks of the bonds of ſin, and deſcribes man in his fallen ſtate to be as much a ſlave to ſin, as if he was really chained down. And indeed a chain

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of the hardeſt iron, or of the tougheſt ſteel, is more eaſily broken, than a long habit of ſin: for the ſoul is then fettered and bound, as much as if the man was chained to the gallies, and yet he endures it willingly, although no galley ſlave is put to harder ſervice, or has a more cruel and inexorable tyrant over him. Ought not this woman, ſays Chriſt, whom ſatan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, to be looſed from this bond? And ſatan hath bound the whole human race, as well as this woman: for of whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought into bondage; and he overcame us all by ſin, and then bound us with the ſtrong chains of it, which no human power can looſe. He only who overcame ſatan, is able to releaſe his priſoners. And the Pſalmiſt in the 68th Pſalm, enumerating ſome of our Lord's great deliverances, ſays in the 6th verſe, "he bringeth out thoſe which "are bound with chains," and the prophet Iſaiah declares, "that he ſhould open the priſon "to them that were bound." Theſe ſcriptures are to be ſpiritually applied: for Chriſt never releaſed any priſoners by breaking open the priſon doors, and ſnapping their bonds aſunder. We meet with nothing of this kind in his life. But we read frequently of his delivering men from the bonds of their ſins, and freeing them from ſatan and death. From whence it follows, that unleſs our great Redeemer had come to break

break off our chains, we muſt have laid bound in affliction and iron for this life, and then have been reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs in the next.

This is a true image and portraiture of every ſon of Adam. While he remains in his natural fallen ſtate he is in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, faſt bound in miſery and iron. And how terrible is this ſituation---to live in darkneſs without one ray of divine light and comfort---to be under the diſmal gloom and ſhadow of death, and to be bound down to this miſery by ſatan, with his ſtrongeſt fetters and chains---certainly this is a ſcene of deep diſtreſs? and the view of it ſhould lead us to enquire, how the gracious Author of our being ſhould ſuffer mankind to become ſubject to it: for he cannot be the cauſe of our miſery; ſo that it muſt have been ſome great and heinous offence, by which we brought ourſelves into theſe diſtreſſes. And let the Pſalmiſt relate the reaſon---" they ſat in darkneſs " and in the ſhadow of death, being bound in " affliction and iron, becauſe they rebelled " againſt the words of God." " Becauſe they " rebelled." This was the grand rebellion for which the head of the family was attainted, and his attainder corrupted the blood of all his children. Our firſt parents took up arms againſt the ſupreme majeſty of heaven, and vainly imagined that they could find knowledge and happineſs,

pineſs, contrary to his declared will, and in oppoſition to his almighty power; and they carried this vain imagination into act: they liſted themſelves under the devil's banner, and ſet themſelves in battle array againſt God, defying his threatnings and his vengeance. In compariſon of this great rebellion, all others have been only weak plots and conſpiracies: for this was the higheſt crime man could commit: becauſe to whom much is given, it is juſt and equitable of them to require the more. And God had given to Adam greater gifts and abilities, with innocence to enable him to uſe them aright, than to any of his deſcendants, and had with the moſt tender affection counſelled him againſt that very temptation, by which he was moſt liable to be ſeduced---therefore when he rebelled againſt God, and contemned the counſel of the moſt high, it was the moſt horrid rebellion that a creature could commit againſt its Creator. And it was far from cruelty in God, it was an act of juſtice without ſeverity, to ſuffer him to fall into the pit, which he had dug for himſelf, and there to be taken by the enemy, and committed a priſoner to darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, and to be faſt bound with miſery and iron. But it may be enquired, why are we ſubject to his miſery? Becauſe we could not but be involved in his guilt. His treaſon corrupted his blood, and being corrupt in the fountain, it could

not but be corrupt in the ſtreams, which iſſue from it. We ſee a ſtanding inſtance of this in the book of nature; a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. And we have a clear evidence of it in the book of God; which declares, that coming from a corrupt ſtock, we are altogether corrupt and abominable, being by nature children of wrath. And we have inconteſtible proof from the equity of our own laws, which not only puniſh treaſon with the loſs of life in the traitor himſelf, but alſo with the loſs of honours and eſtate in his deſcendants to the lateſt poſterity. Now to deny that we are corrupt by nature againſt theſe evident proofs, is a full demonſtration of our corruption. And he is fallen the loweſt, who thinks he is not fallen at all; for he who lives and acts as if he was not a fallen creature, muſt be fartheſt from recovery, and conſequently muſt be moſt miſerable: it is ſtill rebellion to think to be happy in oppoſition to the revealed will of God; and every infidel, becauſe he attempts this, is a rebel; he is a traitor convict; and every infidel ſociety is an army of rebels united under the banner of their chief; who tempts, deludes, infatuates them, and hurries them on, ſometimes even againſt conviction, until the long ſuffering of God be wearied out with their rebellions, and he ſuffer them to fall into the hands of the enemy, who binds them with everlaſting chains under darkneſs. O may

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the God of mercy open their eyes, before they periſh! bleſſed Jeſus ſhew them their guilt, and humble them under the ſenſe of it; that finding their miſery they may fly to thee for ſuccour: for this is the uſual method by which our Lord reclaims the unconverted and the infidel, as it follows in the Pſalm; "Therefore he brought "down their hearts with labour, they fell down "and there was none to help." He brought down their rebellious hearts by labour, he viſited them with outward afflictions, under the weight of which they fell down, and there was none to help; they could not find any help upon earth; all worldly comforters failed them, and then they began to ſee their wretched condition. Their outward miſery made them feel their inward. They found themſelves in darkneſs, which no ray of ſcience, nor the brighteſt beams of human learning, were able to diſpel. They found themſelves in the ſhadow of death, from the terrors of which, all the moral and civil virtues put together could not deliver them. They found themſelves faſt bound in miſery and iron, and all the powers in the earth could not break their chains. Finding their diſtreſs, and ſeeing no creature able to help, they were thereby diſpoſed to humble themſelves under the mighty hand of God. And indeed, their proud hearts were ſo thoroughly brought down and abaſed, that they were led to cry unto the Lord in their trouble,

trouble, and he ſaved them out of their diſtreſſes, The Pſalmiſt in the 13th verſe makes this the happy effect of their affliction; it diſpoſed them to ſeek God's favour, and he is always found of them who ſeek him. So ſoon as they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he was at hand to ſave them from their diſtreſſes. The almighty Saviour came and brought them out of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, and brake their bonds in ſunder. And thus he gave them complete redemption. Darkneſs fled at the approach of the eternal light---and the ſhadow of death was turned into the light of life at the appearance of the living God---and the bonds brake in ſunder, when Chriſt came and proclaimed liberty to them that were bound; and being thus enlightened and ſet free from the bonds of ſin and ſatan, and delivered from the ſhadow of death, after they have obtained ſo free and full a redemption, how can they be ſilent in the Redeemer's praiſe? they then have a lively ſenſe of his redeeming love in their hearts, and it would be acting againſt their own ſenſe and feeling, if they made him no return of gratitude. It would be unnatural. Nay it is indeed impoſſible for men to partake of the bleſſings of redemption, and not to be thankful to their Redeemer. " O that men would therefore " praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and declare " the wonders which he hath done for the ſal-

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"vation of men." Wonders indeed! for he brought them from darkneſs to light, from the ſhadow of death to the life eternal, and from the bonds of miſery to a crown of immortality. And ſhall they not praiſe him for theſe wonders? ſhall they not ſpeak with their tongues what their hearts feel? doubtleſs they will be telling of his ſalvation all the day long: and leſt they ſhould ever forget it, the Pſalmiſt once more reminds them of their great deliverance: for he hath broken the gates of braſs, ſays he, and cut the bars of iron in ſunder. Remember from whence ye were redeemed and be thankful---were ye not in a priſon, that was fortified with gates of braſs, and bars of iron, and were ye not chained down in the moſt dark and loathſome dungeon of this priſon? do you not recollect what horror you were in, when you found yourſelves in this diſtreſs, and had none upon earth to help you? and yet you no ſooner cried to Jeſus for help, than he heard your cries and came: he brake open the gates of braſs, and ſnapped the bars of iron in ſunder; your chains fell off; and he brought you out of the priſon-houſe, and ſet you at liberty. And certainly you do not want to be perſuaded to be thankful for ſuch a deliverance? or to be grateful to ſuch a deliverer? your praiſes ſhould flow with as much eaſe and as naturally as your breath. God grant the one may endure as long as the other,

other, ſo that of his praiſes there may be no end.

I have now finiſhed the paraphraſe upon the words, and I come 2dly, to the ſpiritual uſe and application of them. The doctrine which they contain is this. Every ſon of Adam in his natural ſtate before he is redeemed is in darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death, and is faſt bound with the chains of ſin and miſery, and there is no help for him upon earth---the almighty God and Saviour alone is able to deliver him. This is the doctrine which I have ſupported from other paſſages of ſcripture, and from experience. And now, my brethren, let us examine ourſelves upon it, and try to make it uſeful and profitable to our ſouls. The proper ſteps to this end ſeem to me, firſt, to believe the doctrine---2dly, to deſire to experience the truth of it, and 3dly, to find the happy experience of it in our ſouls, and then we ſhall have reaſon indeed to be thankful.

And firſt, The belief of the doctrine is the chief point in the chriſtian religion. For we muſt be made ſenſible of our fallen ſtate by nature, before we can think of its being renewed by grace. The ſick only want a phyſician. The ſinner only wants a Saviour; and therefore we can have no motive to apply to him for his ſalvation, until we find ourſelves ruined and undone by ſin. So that this muſt be firſt and above

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all things ſettled in our minds. The doctrine of our redemption ſtands upon our belief of the fall; and if man in his fallen ſtate was not in darkneſs, then we want no Saviour to enlighten us: if he was not in the ſhadow of death, then we want no Saviour to deliver us from death: if he was not faſt bound with chains by ſin, and ſatan, and death, then we want no Saviour to break our bonds aſunder. We muſt firſt believe ourſelves to be in theſe diſtreſſes, before we can ſeek for redemption. And therefore, my brethren, do you indeed believe, that you are in your fallen ſtate, in the diſtreſſes here deſcribed by the Pſalmiſt, or do you not believe it? do you ſee no darkneſs in the human mind? do you know none who live in the fear of death? and were you never tied to ſome favourite boſom ſin, which you found it harder to break off, than it could be to break the ſtrongeſt chains of iron? certainly you muſt have remarked ſomething of this kind; and if you have, how can you account for it, othewiſe than upon the Pſalmiſt's principles? if mankind did not loſe the divine light and life by ſin, how came all this ſpiritual darkneſs into their minds? if they did not loſe the love and favour of God by ſin, how came they to be ſubject to death, and to live all their lives in fear of it? if they have not contracted a proneneſs to evil, how happens it to be ſo difficult to break the bonds of ſin? no ſatisfactory account

account can be given of theſe things, but what is taken from the ſcripture hiſtory of the fall, and therefore why ſhould you not believe the ſcripture hiſtory? if you conſult the infidels, they have nothing to offer upon theſe points. their advocates are ſilent. The heathens have written much, and reaſoned more upon the ſubject, but without ſucceſs. Their beſt writers own, that they were not able to clear it up. But upon the chriſtian plan the difficulties vaniſh at once. The ſcripture account is rational and conſiſtent. And why then, my brethren, do you not believe it? you have the word of God and the voice of reaſon, and melancholy experience atteſting the depravity and corruption of mankind. You cannot deny, but that they are depraved and corrupt. This is a ſelf-evident truth. And what remedy is there for it? can God look upon ſuch ſinful polluted creatures with approbation? No. He cannot. The infinite purity of his nature will not ſuffer it. And he will not. He has declared, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord, and he who has once ſinned can never make himſelf holy, and conſequently he can never ſee the Lord—unleſs there be a Redeemer, who has holineſs to give: for God's purity, and ſin's impurity ſet God and the ſinner at an infinite diſtance. And how ſhall he ever approach to God, unleſs there be a Redeemer, who has infinite righteouſneſs to impute

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to the ſinner, and thereby enable him to draw near to God; here is our only remedy. The Redeemer, and he alone, is able to repair all the evil effects of ſin. Our ſouls muſt have remained for ever in darkneſs, unleſs the divine rays of the ſun of righteouſneſs had enlightened them. Our bodies would have lived here in the ſhadow of death, unleſs the Redeemer had brought life and immortality to light. And both body and ſoul would have been bound with the chains of ſin here and for ever, unleſs our almighty deliverer had ſet us at liberty. O let us receive him then for our Redeemer and our God? Finding and feeling our miſery and diſtreſs without him, let there be raiſed in the heart a ſtrong cry for his ſalvation. Let us imitate them in the text, who cried unto the Lord in their trouble. And this deſire to experience his power to redeem us was the ſecond head of application.

If you believe what has been ſaid of your fallen ſtate, and yet have no deſire to be redeemed from it, how do you quiet your conſciences as to this abſurd conduct? you do believe, that man is by nature ſinful and miſerable, and yet you have no deſire to be redeemed from ſin and miſery, how inconſiſtent and contradictory is this proceeding? do you chuſe then to be in darkneſs rather than in light? is death preferable to life, or bonds to liberty? Oh miſerable deluded

man, whom ſin thus infatuates! whoever thou art, thou art ſelf-condemned: becauſe thou haſt ſeen thyſelf fallen, and yet haſt no deſire to be raiſed up. By what arguments, what intreaties, ſhall I prevail with thee? how ſhall I touch thy heart, and win thy affections, to make thee deſire, what thou knoweſt already thou muſt deſire, before thou canſt be happy? bleſſed Jeſus! this is a work above my power. Take it Lord into thine own hand, and ſend thine almighty grace into the hearts of all my hearers who are in this dreadful ſituation, that they may be diſpoſed to ſeek pardon and peace of thee with ſtrong crying and tears, until thou ſave them from their diſtreſſes. Our Redeemer is a God of love: he cannot reject any perſon, who ſeeks for his redemption; ſeek therefore, and ye ſhall find. Deſire, and your deſires ſhall be granted: for they cried unto the Lord Jeſus in their trouble—they only cried unto him, and he ſaved them out of their diſtreſſes. So will he ſave you, if you cry unto him for ſalvation. This is your encouragement, deſire and pray, until you happily experience his redeeming grace, which is the third and laſt point I purpoſed to conſider. The word experience in theſe days of blaſphemy and reproach conveys an odd idea to ſome perſons, and I know that they cannot ſeparate it from enthuſiaſm: but I have remarked, that they who ridicule the word, are entire ſtrangers to the thing: for

for we mean nothing more by experience, than the knowledge of what God has done for our ſouls, which may be as certainly perceived, as any external object can be; for can faith be given, and the heart be changed, and all its affections altered; is it poſſible this ſhould be done, and yet the man who ſuffers this great and total change ſhould not know it? can he be brought out of darkneſs into light, and not be ſenſible of it? can he be delivered from the fear of death, and not find that his fears are gone? can his bonds and chains be broken off, and ſhall he not feel, that he is at liberty? ſurely he muſt--- he muſt know and feel it. He muſt have as clear an idea of it, as a poor condemned priſoner would have of liberty, if he was brought out of the dark dungeon, and his chains and fetters knocked off. If you allow him to experience his deliverance, then you cannot deny the ſame experience to the redeemed of the Lord, whom he has brought out of darkneſs, and whoſe chains he has broken aſunder. For doubtleſs the ſoul may have its experience as well as the body, and the knowledge will be as certain in one caſe as in the other. And it highly concerns all formal nominal chriſtians, and I call upon them, to obſerve this. And I would enquire of them, how they know that they have been redeemed, if they have had no experience

of redemption? will they pretend that they were born in a chriſtian country, and were baptiſed, and have lived ever ſince in the communion of ſome reformed church: be it ſo. But all this entitles them no more to redemption than if they had been born among the heathens or mahometans: for a man born in England wants converſion as much as one born in Turkey. The ſame change of heart is neceſſary for both; and it is certain, being baptiſed does not change the heart, becauſe as children grow up we ſee the ſeeds of vice ſprouting up apace, and nothing can check them but being baptiſed with the holy Ghoſt, of which water baptiſm was the inſtituted emblem and figure: and whoever is baptiſed with the holy Ghoſt, muſt as certainly experience the change it makes in him, as he can ſee or feel any outward object. He was before in darkneſs, now he is in light---before he was afraid of death, now his fears are gone---before he was chained down in a loathſome priſon, now he is at liberty. How can this be, and the man not know it? is it poſſible to open the eyes of a blind man, and he not know it? can he be reſtored to ſight, and not ſee it? certainly you cannot believe any thing ſo abſurd, and yet you do believe a greater abſurdity, if you think yourſelves to be the redeemed of the Lord, and yet have experienced nothing of his redeeming power.

power. Without this experience you are only nominal chriſtians, and I beſeech you (my brethren) not to reſt in the mere name of chriſtianity. If you have no knowledge of what Chriſt has done in your ſouls, you are only chriſtians in profeſſion--you are chriſtians without any ſenſe or feeling chriſtianity, inſenſible chriſtians—what mere nothings are theſe in religion? you fancy you live to Chriſt, and yet you have no perception of this life, what can be more abſurd? therefore be not any longer content with the mere ſhadow of chriſtianity, nor think you have redemption, becauſe you keep ſome of its outward ſervices. Theſe are well, but ſomething more is neceſſary. God is to do the great work in your ſouls. It is all his. You can do nothing to it. You have only to deſire and pray for his redemption. And his grace, which diſpoſes you to deſire and pray, will alſo do all the reſt: for it is he, who worketh in you, both to will and to do—therefore cry unto him, until he work in you both to will and to do. If you cry, he will hear and anſwer—he will bring you from darkneſs to light, from the ſhadow of death to life eternal, and from the bonds of ſin and ſatan into the perfect liberty of the ſons of God. And may the bleſſed Jeſus give you the experience of theſe great changes, that you may find him almighty to perfect your redemp-

tion, and then you will be thankful. Senſible of your own miſery by nature, and of the bleſſings of his free grace, you will not be ſilent in your Redeemer's praiſe. Your grateful hearts will overflow with expreſſions of thankfulneſs, and you will live entirely to him, who now liveth in you. And ſo many as are in this happy ſtate, who have taſted how good and gracious our Redeemer is, will now draw near unto him, and ſend up their earneſt requeſt to him for his bleſſing upon what you have heard. And

We beſeech thee, O moſt adorable God and Saviour, to make this diſcourſe uſeful and profitable to our ſouls. We confeſs that we were by nature in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, and were faſt bound with the chains of miſery and ſin. Thus low were we fallen, and there was none to help. But as ſoon as we cried unto thee, bleſſed Jeſus, thou waſt at hand to ſave and didſt deliver us from all our diſtreſſes. We praiſe and glorify thee for thy free and full redemption. And grant, O Lord, to this whole congregation the ſame happy experience. Send thy good Spirit into all their hearts, and ſo intirely change them from ſin to righteouſneſs, that they finding thee to be alſo their Redeemer and their God, may join with us in praiſing thee for thy goodneſs, and in declaring the wonders which

which thou haſt done for our ſalvation. O thou God of love let no one leave this place without a bleſſing: but hear and anſwer according to the riches of thy mercy to the glory of the Father and of the eternal Spirit, three perſons of equal power, majeſty, and dominion, to whom be aſcribed equal honour and worſhip, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON V.

PSALM CVII. 17---23.

Fools becauſe of their tranſgreſſion, and becauſe of their iniquities are afflicted: their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he ſaveth them out of their diſtreſſes. He ſent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their deſtructions. Oh that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. And let them ſacrifice the ſacrifices of thankſgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

THE ſubject of this Pſalm is thankſgiving: the motives by which the holy Spirit tries to ſtir us up to be thankful are taken from redemption; which is the greateſt mercy God has beſtowed upon mankind, and therefore it juſtly demands the greateſt thankfulneſs. But becauſe the all-wiſe Inſpirer of this divine hymn knew the abominable corruption of our hearts, and that we were by nature unholy and unthankful, he has therefore uſed ſeveral arguments to convince us. He is earneſt and importunate with us. He calls aloud to us again and again, ſolicits, preſſes us, to open our eyes, and to behold the wonders which

which God hath done for our redemption. And to give an edge to theſe repeated intreaties, and to make them pierce the deeper, he has adorned them with the ornaments of language, and the graces of ſentiment. The very compoſition has every thing beautiful and ſublime, that can recommend it to our eſteem; and he who knows the heart, and what is moſt likely to make an impreſſion upon it, has ſtill farther heightened the ſubject by four paintings from nature, which he has drawn in the moſt lively and ſtriking colours. The deſign of each of theſe pieces is to repreſent our fallen ſtate in the moſt affecting point of view, that ſeeing and feeling the exquiſite diſtreſs of it, we may be induced to cry unto the Lord Jeſus for deliverance; who never ſhutteth out the cry of the poor deſtitute, but hears and comes with all the haſte that almighty love can make, to deliver and to ſave. The ſubject of the firſt painting is laid in a wilderneſs: fallen man is like a traveller, loſt and bewildered in a deſert, weary and faint, and ready to periſh with famine. In the ſecond piece his diſtreſs increaſes, for he falls into a pit of darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, where the enemy finds him, and puts him in chains, binding him with miſery and iron. In the third, which we are going to view at preſent, you will ſee him laying in a ſcene of ſtill greater diſtreſs. Behold him here quite worn down with ſickneſs. See how

how pale and feeble and emaciated he looks---his ſtrength gone---his appetite loſt---his breath failing---he draws near to the gates of death. This is the affecting ſcene on which we are now to fix our eyes. And I hope you will attend to the Pſalmiſt's account of the cauſes and ſymptoms of our diſorders, of the proper remedy, and of the means to avoid diſeaſes for the future. I know you all value health: nothing is dearer to you: for without it life itſelf is a burden; therefore hear what the Pſalmiſt has to offer upon theſe points, and let this awaken your cloſeſt attention, that he does not borrow his rules from books, or from the experience of the ableſt phyſicians, but he received them from the author of our being. The all-wiſe God revealed them to him, and through him to us, and may he guide our hearts, that we may receive by his grace all that profit from this ſcripture, which he intended it ſhould be the means of adminiſtering to the faithful. May his good Spirit ſanctify our hearts, while we are viewing the three chief parts of this highly finiſhed painting.

Firſt, The diſtreſs of the ſick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great phyſician. And,

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

As to the firſt particular, the cauſe of their ſickneſs is thus deſcribed. "Fooliſh men by a "courſe of ſin, and wickedneſs are afflicted and

"brought

" brought low." Sin was the fruitful parent of all their diſorders ; and though they knew it, though they ſaw daily ſad experience of it, yet they were ſuch fools as ſtill to ſin on, and to perſevere obſtinately at the expence of their own health and life. What a ſtrong deluſion was this? they found themſelves weakened and enfeebled, quite worn down with labouring in the ways of ſin, and yet they were ſo infatuated, as to perſiſt. Might not the Pſalmiſt with good reaſon call ſuch men fools? what could be greater folly than to continue in an habit of ſinning, until it had brought them ſo low, " that their ſoul ab-
" horred all manner of meat, and they drew
" nigh to the gates of death ?" A courſe of ſin was the cauſe of their diſorder, and in theſe words the Pſalmiſt gives us the dangerous ſymptoms of it: food is neceſſary to our being: the deſire of it is a natural appetite, but when nature loſes the deſire for that which is neceſſary to its very being, it muſt be then greatly diſordered. The ſtomach muſt have been much injured, and the organs dangerouſly impaired, indeed the whole body muſt be in a very bad habit, before all appetite could be loſt. But how much more dangerous are the ſymptoms, when nature does not only ceaſe to deſire, but cannot even bear the moſt innocent food? when the ſtomach is become ſo weak and tender, that it cannot digeſt the lighteſt meat, the caſe is then growing deſperate,

perate, and there ſeems to be no hopes left, when it comes to the laſt ſtage here deſcribed, viz. to loath and abhor all manner of meat. The ſtomach turns at the ſight of it. And the man has this loathing and abhorrence of all manner of meat; what he moſt loved, and had the beſt appetite for, is now become ſo very offenſive, that at the ſmell of it he grows ſick, and faints away. Nature cannot ſupport itſelf long under this diſorder. If this loſs of appetite, and loathing even the ſmell of the moſt ſimple food continue, it muſt wear the patient out: indeed it is not always a mortal diſtemper; there may be an entire loathing of food, and even fainting away at the ſmell of it, and the patient may ſometimes recover. But in the preſent caſe, the diſtemper had continued ſo long, and was grown ſo inveterate that there were no hopes, for they draw nigh, the Pſalmiſt ſays, to the gates of death, theſe gates of braſs, and bars of iron, with which death locks up his priſoners in the grave; and you may judge how great muſt be the ſtrength of theſe gates and bars, ſince only one perſon was ever able to break through them, and if he had not been more than man, he could never have broken theſe gates of braſs, nor cut theſe bars of iron in ſunder.

This is the ſtriking image in the text, and in order to ſee it in the moſt affecting point of view, you ſhould viſit a perſon in this diſtreſs. Go to his

his ſick bed and behold him in this languiſhing condition, laying weak and feeble, and wearing away apace through loſs of appetite: you ſee all the organs of the body for want of natural ſupplies begin to be unable to perform their proper offices. And as the bodily ſtrength decays, the faculties of the mind alſo are impaired. His memory is ſhort. He is ſcarce able to diſtinguiſh one object from another. If you continue for ſome time by his bedſide, and examine all the ſymptoms of his diſorder, it muſt greatly move your compaſſion to ſee him in ſuch pain and miſery. You cannot but feel tenderly for him, and the more, if you recollect, that this caſe may ſoon be your own. And if you thus bring it home and apply it to yourſelves, it may be natural to give a vent to your pity, and to ſhed one compaſſionate tear over your diſtreſſed fellow creature. But if the perſon who is in this diſorder ſhould happen to be dear to you, a relation, a friend, as near as the wife of your boſom, you could not behold them in theſe agonies without ſuffering along with them. And I aſk every tender humane perſon among you, whether he does not think ſorrow would become him on ſuch an occaſion? You ſee how naturally tears flow at the ſight of a painted ſcene in a deep tragedy: and what then would the world ſay of an huſband, who could ſee his wife languiſhing under the loſs of appetite, and yet ſtand by

by her unconcerned, even after the phyſician had pronounced her caſe deſperate. A man of the leaſt compaſſion would be greatly affected, and I appeal to every one of you, whether you would not approve of his tender concern for ſo dear and intimate a relation. I know you would think yourſelves inhuman and brutiſh, if you felt no ſentiments of pity for the ſufferings of your boſom friend. And

What can be dearer to you, than your own ſouls? have pity therefore upon yourſelves: for you are the men. This is your own picture, painted from nature, and by the eternal Spirit of God. You are theſe very perſons, labouring under this loſs of appetite. Every one of you by the fall is in this dreadful caſe; O therefore turn your compaſſion upon yourſelves. And if the ſight of the bodily diſeaſe in others made you ſuffer, let your ſuffering be doubled at the ſight of your own inward diſeaſe. Can you mourn over theſe outward maladies, and can you ſpare no tears for your poor diſtempered ſouls? ſhall they be ſick unto death, and ſhall not the bowels of your compaſſion be moved?

But you do not find them ſick; you feel no pains for the loſs of appetite. This is the worſt ſymptom: for ſin, which was the cauſe of the diſorder, has now deluded you into the laſt ſtage of it. You are dying; and yet the deluſion of

ſin is ſo ſtrong, that you have no concern for your own death, your eternal death. O! my brethren, for the love of God, and all that is dear and valuable to you, in time and eternity, rouſe up your tenderneſs and pity. The Lord grant you may ſhake off this ſpiritual lethargy, which makes you ſo inſenſible of the diſtreſſed ſtate of your ſouls. May he awaken you from this dead ſleep of ſin, and open your eyes to ſee your danger: for indeed we are all in this diſtreſs. Sin has robbed us of all appetite for our ſpiritual food. We have no deſire, no reliſh for it; nay, while we continue in ſin, we abhor it, we loath it, our ſtomachs turn againſt it, and we cannot help ſhewing our reſentment againſt them, who perſuade us, and earneſtly intreat us to take it, and live.

That all men are by nature in this ſituation, whether they ſee it or not, will be proved in the ſequel: indeed it is plain enough from the text: for the plalmiſt teaches us, that ſin is the cauſe of this diſorder, conſequently all who have ſinned muſt be thus diſordered; and are we not all ſinners? and are not theſe ſinners in the greateſt danger, who do not ſee that ſin has brought them into this diſorder? for by not feeling their diſtreſs they have no motive to cry out for help: but if it ſhould pleaſe God to open their eyes, and to ſhew them their ſpiritual malady, at the very ſight of their extreme danger they would be

be moved to implore deliverance. And the firſt ſigh that comes from an awakened heart pierces the ears of our gracious God. The Lord Jeſus hears it, and he comes with all the haſte almighty love can make to anſwer it: for it follows in the 19th verſe, "Then they cry unto the Lord "in their trouble, and he ſaveth them out of "their diſtreſſes;" as ſoon as they cried for ſalvation the great phyſician was ſent to ſave them---"Jehovah ſent his word, and healed "them, and they were delivered from their "deſtructions." His word who healed them was his eſſential word---even the ſecond perſon in the Godhead, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt---the word who was made fleſh and dwelt among us: of this divine word it was foretold in the Old Teſtament, that he ſhould ariſe with the glory of the morning ſun, bringing healing in his wings for all our maladies: and accordingly the New Teſtament relates, that Jeſus went about all Galilee, preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing ALL manner of ſickneſs, and ALL manner of diſeaſe among the people. He healed the bodily diſeaſes miraculouſly, to prove that he was the almighty phyſician of the ſoul. And it is remarkable that he never rejected any perſon, who applied to him for an outward cure, to demonſtrate to us, that he would never caſt out any perſon, who ſhould apply to him for a ſpiritual cure. You hear in the text, that

ſo

ſo ſoon as they cried to him, he was at hand to ſave, and they had happy experience of the Pſalmiſt's deſcription of him---" He giveth them " medicine to heal their ſickneſs"---He gave them a medicine which preſently reſtored to them a good appetite. He ſent his divine grace into their hearts, which took off their loathing and abhorrence of food, and then raiſed in them an hungering and thirſting after Chriſt's righteouſneſs---and this appetite for it will always be ſatisfied: for bleſſed are they, ſays the almighty phyſician himſelf, bleſſed are they that hunger now: for they ſhall be filled---they ſhall have more grace, who have a ſpiritual appetite, an hungering for more---they ſhall be even filled with grace: for he hath filled the hungry with good things, with grace to juſtify, and with grace to ſanctify; theſe are good things, including every thing that is good, ſhort of glory.

And after the free love and mercy of our moſt adorable phyſician has raiſed us from the death of ſin, and given us a new life with new faculties and new appetites, and our ſpiritual food is now grown pleaſant and deſirable to our ſouls, ſo that we taſte it and reliſh it with joy; how then can we forbear breaking out into his praiſes, who has been ſo exceedingly gracious unto us? we cannot refrain. It would be offering violence in us to enjoin ſilence. We muſt

be telling of what our deareſt Lord has done for our recovery, and ſorry we are from our hearts, that we cannot honour him, as we could wiſh. Our beſt oblations, our higheſt praiſes, what are they, how poor and unworthy a return for his ineſtimable love? but thou haſt required them, bleſſed Jeſus, and we preſent them before thee, knowing that we ſtand in need of thy merits to pardon our imperfect praiſes; O make them ſuch as God the Father may accept: for we now praiſe thee for thy goodneſs, and we declare to all the world, that thou haſt done wonders of mercy for our ſalvation. And when the prophet enquired "what ſhall I render unto the "Lord for all his benefits done unto me?" he was led by the holy Spirit to make this reſolution. "I will take the cup of ſalvation, and "call upon the name of the Lord:" he went to the bleſſed ſacrament, there to offer his ſacrifice of thankſgiving, and there the holy Spirit directs the redeemed of the Lord to go in the laſt verſe of the text. "And they ſacrificed the "ſacrifices of thankſgiving, and declared his "works with rejoicing." This was the ſacrifice of the Euchariſt, to which the perſons, who have been healed of their ſpiritual maladies, go in grateful remembrance of the numerous and endleſs bleſſings, derived to them from the body and blood of Jeſus Chriſt; of which the ſacrifices of thankſgiving under the law were expreſſive

preſſive memorials: for at every ſuch ſacrifice the blood of ſome pure clean animal was ſhed, and there were offered with it unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and the fleſh of the ſacrifice was to be eaten the ſame day it was offered. In like manner at our ſacrifice of thankſgiving, where theſe figures are realized, we have the ſacramental blood of the moſt clean and unſpotted lamb of God, with which we have bread, that is verily and indeed the fleſh of Chriſt to the faithful, when it is, like theſe wafers and cakes, anointed with the holy unction of the bleſſed Spirit: when he accompanies the outward elements with his divine grace and bleſſing, then we partake of the body and blood of Chriſt. And his body is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed---the only meat and drink which can ſupport the ſoul: for without them we have no life, no ſpiritual divine life abiding in us. And after Chriſt has healed our infirmities, and reſtored our loſt appetite, where ſhould we go for food but to our Lord's table? where can we receive, but from his body and blood, ſupport to our ſouls, and growth in grace? he has inſtituted theſe outward ſigns to ſignify his inward grace, and has aſſured us, that he will do the ſame thing to the ſoul, which the elements do to the body. Upon this promiſe the redeemed reſt. They go to the holy ſacrament, both to offer their ſacrifices of thankſ-

giving for what their Saviour hath done for their ſouls, and alſo to receive freſh pledges of his love and bounty. And whoever approaches the Lord's table with this faith, will always find occaſion, when he comes from it to declare the works of Chriſt with rejoicing. God grant this whole ſcripture may be fulfilled in every one who hears me, that ſeeing your natural ſickneſs by ſin, you may be diſpoſed to fly to the great phyſician, and may receive ſuch a perfect cure, that his praiſes may be your delight and joy for ever and ever.

I have now gone through the paraphraſe upon the words; you have heard the ſenſe and meaning of them laid open. They contain a moſt affecting image of the miſery and diſtreſs of our fallen nature, which we will briefly review by way of ſpiritual application in theſe three particulars, under which it was before conſidered in the paraphraſe.

Firſt, The diſtreſs of the ſick.

Secondly, Their cure by the great phyſician. And,

Thirdly, Their grateful behaviour to him.

And firſt, As to the diſtreſs of the ſick, you have ſeen it drawn by the holy Spirit in the ſtrongeſt colours: and his painting has an univerſal likeneſs. It does not repreſent this or that man, but every man; every ſon of fallen Adam is here painted to the life: for before he is re-

deemed, he lies languiſhing and pining away in a courſe of ſin: his ſoul is in ſuch a bad habit, as his body is in, when it has loſt all appetite for food, and not only does not deſire it, but even loaths it, and continues in this weak feeble condition, until it draws near to the gates of death. Now Chriſt is the only ſupport and food of the ſinful ſoul; and yet it has no appetite for him, not only does not deſire him, but even loaths and abhors him, while it is drawing near to the gates of death, and it will be the Lord's mercy, if the gates be not ſoon ſhut upon it.

And now, my brethren, let me bring this point home to you. Do you indeed believe, that this is a true picture of human nature, and of every one of you in your ſinful ſtate, before you have redemption? through faith in the blood of Jeſus? the holy Spirit who drew it, declares it is. And why ſhould you not believe him? for it is founded upon a plain matter of fact, which you cannot deny, and that is, the univerſal corruption of mankind. If they be all ſinners by nature, which is as certain as that they are men by nature, then they are all ſick, and this picture is a true likeneſs of them all: for ſin brings the ſoul low, and weakens its faculties, as ſickneſs does the body and its faculties; and as ſickneſs takes away the appetite of the body, and creates an averſion to food, ſo does ſin take away the appetite of the ſoul, and create an averſion to its

its food. This is plain matter of fact, and it is ſcripture too: for ſin is the cauſe of this ſpiritual malady, and ſince all men have ſinned, all men therefore are ſpiritually diſeaſed with the pains and miſeries of ſin. And there is no remedy upon earth, no human means, either by ſimple repentance, or by morality, to heal this dangerous ſickneſs. The divine and almighty phyſician is the only healer of the nations, but the moraliſt and the infidel want him not—the whole want no phyſician, but they that are ſick, but they, who ſee and feel the evil effects of ſin, earneſtly ſeek and implore his help, and for them he has healing in his wings; as the Evangeliſt has remarked—and "Jeſus "healed all that were ſick, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, "ſaying, himſelf took our infirmities and bare "our ſickneſſes." And when took he our infirmities, and bare our ſickneſſes? was it not when he bare our ſins in his own body upon the tree? for by his ſtripes we are healed. When he took away our ſins, he then had power to heal us, and conſequently if he had not taken our ſins away, we could not have been healed: but we muſt have remained in the foul leproſy of our tranſgreſſions, and in ſuch a like condition as the prophet Iſaiah has deſcribed. "Ah! "ſinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a "ſeed of evil doers, children of corrupters---the "whole

" whole head is ſick, and the whole heart is " faint—from the ſole of the foot, even unto the " head there is no ſoundneſs in it, but wounds, " and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores." This is a true deſcription of all ſinful people, and of every ſinner in particular. And the image is juſt and expreſſive if you apply to the ſoul what is here ſaid of the body: for ſin makes the whole head ſick, and the whole heart faint. Sin diſorders all the faculties of the ſoul, ſo that from the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs; they are all corrupt, and the corruption will as certainly end in the deſtruction of the ſoul, as a like total corruption in the body would end in its deſtruction.

But I have heard perſons enquiring, how can this be? can I be thus ſick, even unto death, and not know it, and not feel it? moſt undoubtedly you may. Your caſe may be dangerous, even deſperate, and yet you may have no ſenſe of it: for this is a ſpiritual diſeaſe, and the cauſe of it is ſin, and every ſin obſcures and blinds the eyes of the ſoul, and makes its other ſenſes groſs and thick, and an habit of ſin deadens them entirely, what St. Paul, ſpeaking of the unregenerate, calls being paſt all feeling. So that you may be ſick unto death, and yet be paſt all feeling. The body in the mean while may be in health, and the ſoul may be dying. The body may be as ſtrong as Sampſon, and yet the poor ſoul may be

be languiſhing and fainting, and drawing near to the gates of death: and it is the nearer the leſs apprehenſive you are of it. If ſin has ſo blinded and deluded you, that you neither ſee your guilt, nor feel your danger, your caſe I pronounce to be at preſent deſperate. You ſtand on the precipice. You are on the very brink of ruin---one ſtep more, and behold the pit is open. You fall. You are loſt for ever. Eternal deſtruction is your portion. Men and brethren, take warning. I intreat you by the tender mercies of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to ſtop, and to conſider your caſe. Unleſs you are in love with pain and miſery, be perſuaded to requeſt of our God, to open your eyes. Let me beg of you, for I ſee your extreme danger, and out of love to your ſouls I importune you, to deſire God to ſhew your true ſtate. And will you not vouchſafe to ſend up one deſire to him for yourſelves? but are you fully determined to keep your eyes ſhut againſt your danger, and to go on in your ſins? would to God I knew the proper motives to awaken your conſciences, and to make you ſenſible, that your ſickneſs is unto death, if I did, you ſhould not ſleep a moment longer upon the brink of eternal deſtruction: for there indeed you lay, whether you ſee your danger or not. And can none of my exhortations, none of my friendly intreaties prevail with you to rouſe up and to look into your own hearts, and to examine your ſtate and condition? cannot I pre-

I prevail? if you ſtill turn a deaf ear to me, O bleſſed Jeſus, I will then turn to thee. Thou God of love, ſend thy good Spirit upon every perſon here preſent, on whom my arguments have made no impreſſion, and ſhew them the dangerous malady of ſin; that feeling the pain and miſery of it, there may be raiſed in their hearts a ſtrong cry for thy ſalvation. And may our moſt adorable God now work in you this happy change, that you may be diſpoſed to apply for your cure to the great phyſician of ſouls.

Which is the ſecond remark. You have heard how he treated the ſick perſons in the text. So ſoon as they cried to him for help, he came, and by a remedy which never failed reſtored them to perfect health; and he treats all his patients with the ſame love and mercy. He only waits, till they be made to ſee their miſery, and to cry unto him for deliverance: and if it be but one deep ſigh, but one ſhort prayer, "Lord "Jeſus, be merciful unto me a ſinner," if it come from the heart, he will be merciful: for his readineſs to relieve the diſtreſſed is the ſecond part of this beautiful painting---"Then they "cried unto the Lord," ſays the Pſalmiſt, "in "their trouble, and he delivered them from their "diſtreſſes--he ſent his word and healed them--" The Lord Jeſus himſelf came. The great healer of the nations heard their cries, the bowels of his compaſſion were moved at the ſight of their miſery,

miſery, and that tender heart which bled for them on the croſs, now melted into pity: for he deſireth not the death of ſinners, but rather that they ſhould repent and live. He died to give them life, and now they are aſking for it, how can he refuſe it? can he, who came down from heaven, and left his eternal throne, and laid aſide his divine glory for a time; can he, who went through the world poor and deſpiſed, hungry, and thirſty, and weary, can he be without love? did not he ſubmit to this low abaſement, and to theſe miſeries, in order that he might be the ſovereign phyſician of ſinners? And now he has laid them proſtrate at his feet, humbly imploring his free grace to raiſe them up, is it impoſſible he ſhould deny to heal them? The crucified Saviour cannot want love—the almighty God cannot want power—and therefore whoſoever cometh unto him for cure, he will in no wiſe caſt out.

Such is Jeſus—our moſt adorable phyſician—and are you not in love with his amiable character? how ſhould it endear him to us, that he is always diſpoſed freely to heal, and that there is no ſpiritual diſeaſe ſo dangerous and inveterate, but he has ſkill to heal it, nor any ſo offenſive or odious in his ſight, but he has mercy to heal it? he neither wants will nor power. And can you believe this, are you verily perſuaded, that the God of love is ready to heal you of all your maladies, and will you not come to him for a cure?

when

when the bleſſed Jeſus invites, when he preſſes you to accept health and ſalvation at his hands, what can tempt you to reject his gracious offer? I now ſtand up in his name, and by his authority now proclaim theſe tidings of great joy—" I will " heal their backſlidings, I will love them freely." Theſe are our Lord's own words in the prophet Hoſea xiv. 4. And becauſe he loves ſinners freely, therefore he heals them freely. He requires no previous condition, but that they ſee and feel their ſickneſs, and this he makes them ſenſible of, and then his free grace reſtores them to perfect health. And to ſuch a phyſician, who would not apply? to a phyſician who is almighty to heal, and whoſe love refuſes none that apply to him, be they ever ſo ſick and ſinful—and who does all this freely. Free grace is his only motive. And upon hearing of ſuch a phyſician, and knowing that you are ſinners, and want his help, will any of you think of leaving the church, without applying to him for relief? God forbid. I hope none of you will be ſuch enemies to yourſelves. What! will you prefer ſickneſs to health, and pain to pleaſure? Can you be thus infatuated by ſin? Is there any of you ſtill under this ſtrong deluſion? if you are, may the almighty phyſician take your caſe into his own hands, and out of his infinite love and compaſſion firſt diſpoſe you to ſeek health from him, and then freely beſtow it upon you. Bleſſed Jeſus, let thy divine power

be

be now preſent to heal every one of us, that we may all join in giving thanks and glory to thy name, which is the Pſalmiſt's third remark in the text.

I ſhall ſpeak very briefly to this particular, becauſe it concerns only thoſe perſons, who have experienced the ſkill of the great phyſician. They alone are here called upon to offer their ſacrifice of thankſgiving. None can be thankful to Chriſt, but they who have taſted of his redeeming love: becauſe thankfulneſs ariſes from our ſenſe of his mercy. We muſt firſt cry unto him to ſave us from the mortal diſeaſe of ſin, and afterwards have received ſalvation, before our minds are rightly diſpoſed to be thankful. And when the almighty healer has thus graciouſly reſtored us, we can no more with this experience of his love refrain from his praiſes, than we can refrain from breathing: the redeemed of the Lord praiſe him as freely as they breathe: for praiſe is as much the breath of a redeemed ſoul, as air is of his body. The redeemed cannot be ſilent. It is their delight and joy, and they are never more happy, than when they are praiſing the Lord Jeſus for his goodneſs, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for their ſalvation. O! may the number of the redeemed of the Lord increaſe daily. May the honour and praiſe of our almighty phyſician ſpread, and be celebrated with more tongues, and with more grateful hearts. O thou ſovereign

healer

healer of every ſinful malady, let thy fame be more known in the earth, and thy ſaving health among all nations. Manifeſt thy power to heal all the diſeaſes of ſin, but more eſpecially manifeſt it to this congregation. O thou God of love, let thy power now be preſent to heal. We call upon thee, bleſſed Jeſus, we earneſtly intreat thee, to hear us, and grant that no one perſon may leave this place, until they either deſire to find, or do indeed find, that thou art a moſt loving God, almighty to heal the greateſt of ſinners: and for theſe our prayers we deſire acceptance through thine infinite merits, that thou mayeſt anſwer them to the glory of God the Father, and to the honor of the holy Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worſhip and adore, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

PSALM CVII. 23—33.

They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters; theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep: For he commandeth and raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths, their ſoul is melted becauſe of trouble; they reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their diſtreſſes. He maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves thereof are ſtill. Then are they glad, becauſe they be quiet; ſo he bringeth them unto their deſired haven. O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let them exalt him alſo in the congregation of the people, and praiſe him in the aſſembly of the elders.

THE Pſalmiſt, in this divine hymn, calls upon us to be thankful for the bleſſings of redemption, and in order to inſpire us with the greater thankfulneſs, he ſets before us a perfect repreſentation of man's miſery before he is redeemed. The three

three firſt parts of this ſacred painting have been already conſidered. We have ſeen, that man, in his natural fallen ſtate, is as much at a loſs to find out the way to heaven, as a traveller would be in ſome vaſt deſert, where he is quite loſt and ready to periſh. He is as much unable to walk in the way, even if he were directed aright, being faſt bound with the chains of ſin, as a priſoner would be, who is ſhut up in a dungeon, and there bound with miſery and iron. And if his chains were knocked off, and the priſon doors thrown open, yet he is in ſuch a weak languiſhing condition, that he cannot ſtir one ſtep. He has ſo weakened and impaired his faculties by a courſe of ſin, which has brought on him a total loſs of appetite, and has ſo worn him away, that he is now near to the gates of death. Theſe are the three beautiful images, under which the holy Spirit has drawn the picture of our fallen nature. The fourth, which puts a finiſhing hand to the performance, is contained in the words now read; wherein our diſtreſs is ſtill heightened, and our danger is painted in more ſtrong colouring. The ſubject of this laſt piece is a ſtorm at ſea, and I believe there is not in the univerſe an object more great and ſtriking, nor is it poſſible to repreſent it in words more clear, or in deſcriptions more affecting, than what the holy Spirit has here uſed. May he diſpoſe your hearts to receive the inſtruction, which they hold

out to you, that every one of you may reap the profit from them, for which he inſpired them and left them upon record. And to this end you will look up to him for his grace and bleſſing, while I am,

Firſt, Laying before you a paraphraſe upon the words; and then,

Secondly, Applying the doctrine contained in them to your ſpiritual benefit and improvement. And,

Firſt, The holy Spirit has here given us the repreſentation of a ſtorm at ſea; which is ſo expreſſive and ſublime, that the bare reading of it is ſufficient to humble the pride of human genius. If one of the beſt heathen poets had undertaken to write upon the ſubject, he would probably have given us a volume upon it. Whereas this ſacred drawing, though it be ſhort, is nevertheleſs abſolutely complete. The deſcription riſes up to the greatneſs of the ſubject, and every circumſtance in the order it is mentioned heightens what went before, and makes the whole ſo full and perfect, that they who have been in a ſtorm at ſea, and in danger, of being caſt away, cannot but tremble at this relation of it. "They who go down to the "ſea in ſhips, and occupy their buſineſs in great "waters; theſe men ſee the works of the Lord, "and his wonders in the deep." We ſee his wonders every where; the creation is full of them.

them. In every place, in every condition of life, we may behold evident marks of almighty power and infinite wiſdom; but they who live a ſeafaring life, have more evident marks than any other perſons: for they ſee the moſt wonderful diſplay of the divine attributes. Upon the land we can ſcarce form an idea of what they feel and endure at ſea, when at the word of God, "the ſtormy wind ariſeth, which lifteth up "the waves thereof." The accidents of the ſtorm, and the cauſes on which they depend, are here ſo juſtly repreſented, that it is not poſſible to ſee a more affecting picture. You may here behold diſtinctly and in beautiful order, the command of God—the action of the wind---the rage of the waves---and the diſtreſs of the mariners. God commands the wind to ariſe---the wind raiſes and lifts up the waves of the ſea---the waves beat furiouſly againſt the veſſel---put her in danger---and this danger raiſes another tempeſt in the ſouls of the poor mariners. In this chain of cauſes and effects God holds the firſt place; for he commandeth the ſtormy wind, and then the wind lifteth up the waves of the deep. Although the wind be nothing but air in motion, yet there is no agent in nature capable of acting with greater force and violence. The ſea, in a perfect calm, appears to be one beautiful and even plain, ſmooth as the poliſhed marble; but the wind no ſooner begins to blow,

than it is ruffled and agitated. And when it blows with might and fury, it toſſes up the waves, and beats them one againſt another with ſuch impetuoſity, that the noiſe is inceſſant, and as loud as thunder. And then heaping wave upon wave, they here ſwell into lofty mountains, and there ſink down into deep and horrible vallies. The natural weight of the water carries it down, and the violence of the ſtorm raiſes it up, and by the oppoſition of theſe two jarring elements there is formed the moſt dreadful conflict, which is to be ſeen in the univerſe; even on the ſhore, where you are ſafe, yet you cannot behold it without horror. But what muſt be their ſituation who are in the midſt of the ſtorm, and over whoſe heads the raging billows are breaking every moment? how great muſt be their diſtreſs, when they find their veſſel become the ſport of the winds and waves, and ſometimes carried up to heaven, up high into the air, and preſently down again into the deep? And to give us a ſtrong image of the confuſion of the mariners, the holy Spirit adds, that they reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken man, toſſed from one ſide to the other, thrown up and down, and reeling about, as unable to walk upright in the ſhip, as a drunken man is upon the land. In this diſtreſs they find the rudder, and the ſails, and the oars, of no uſe. The fury of the wind and ſtorm carry the veſſel where they pleaſe, and

the waves beating againſt her with all their might, in different parts, and in different directions, ſhake her ſtrongeſt timbers, and make ſuch wide leaks, into which the ſea comes pouring in, that the affrighted mariners are at their wits end. All their wiſdom is ſwallowed up. The light of reaſon cannot ſuggeſt to them any expedient, or if it could, yet the ſtrength and arm of fleſh are not able to carry it into execution. All hope of being ſaved is now taken away, and their ſouls are in the utmoſt fear and dread, and melt away becauſe of the trouble, as it is here expreſſed—no ſtability is left, no courage remains. Their minds are agitated like the ocean, and in as much confuſion: for beſides the loſs of the veſſel, and of the goods, on which they ſet but too great a value, they can turn their eyes no way, but they ſee the waves ready to ſwallow them up, and death awaiting them on every ſide. No deſired ſhore, no favourable haven appears. On earth there is no proſpect of deliverance.

This is a ſhort ſketch of the holy Spirit's deſcription, which, how briefly ſoever I may have repreſented it, is nevertheleſs perfectly expreſſive and ſublime in itſelf, and will appear more ſo to them, who have ſeen a ſtorm in its higheſt rage and fury: for if you have never ſeen one, you can form but very faint ideas of it. I judge thus from my own experience: for I have ſeen

many ſtorms from the ſhore, and thought I could have given a good deſcription of them; but when I was afterwards really in one, and in danger, I then found that my former knowledge was very imperfect. To be in a ſtorm at ſea is as different from ſeeing it from the ſhore, as a painted ſtorm differs from a real one. It felt very differently to me from what it had ever done before; when I was in the midſt of the waves, and was toſſed up to heaven, and then down again to the deep. The ſea ran ſo high, that I well remember, when our ſhip was down in the deep, between two waves, I could not ſee the top of the maſt of a large veſſel, which came very near us during the ſtorm. You may judge what a ſituation we were then in. I believe the ſtouteſt heart among you would have trembled upon this occaſion. If you would know how you ſhould have behaved, put yourſelves in the ſame ſituation we were in. Suppoſe yourſelves to have been ſeveral days in a troubled ſea, toſſed with winds and tempeſts, and at laſt all hopes of being ſaved began to fail. What do you think would be your ſentiments, if the ſtorm ſhould ſtill continue, the veſſel ſhould grow leaky and ready to ſink, and inſtant death was before your eyes? if you could really ſuppoſe yourſelves to be in this ſituation, you would want none of my arguments to perſuade you to ſeek help from God in ſuch a time of need. Would not you

pray,

pray, and intreat him with ſtrong crying and tears to come to your aſſiſtance? O with what earneſtneſs would your ſouls implore and beg him to ſtretch out his merciful hand, and ſave you from periſhing! let there then be raiſed in your hearts the ſame ſtrong crying and tears, that you may be delivered from a more dreadful ſtorm, than what we have been conſidering. This tempeſt in the natural world is but a faint image of a much greater, which ſin has occaſioned in the ſpiritual world. The one is but a painted ſtorm compared to the other. And to this more terrible ſtorm you are all ſubject. Every ſon of Adam being a ſinner, is embarked on a troubled ſea, where the winds and waves are contrary: for it muſt be remembered, that this deſcription cannot be peculiar to ſailors, becauſe the whole Pſalm is ſpiritual, it belongs to the redeemed of the Lord, and all his redeemed people do not literally go down to the ſea in ſhips, nor do they meet with ſtorms from the rage of winds and waves; and yet they are all called upon to be thankful for being delivered from ſome ſtorm, conſequently they were all in this ſtorm before they were redeemed, and they were thrown into it by the ſame cauſe, which made them loſe themſelves in the wilderneſs---fall into the pit---ſicken and pine away for want of appetite. Sin was the fruitful parent of all theſe miſeries. And the ſtorm which ſin raiſes is in the ſoul.

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It is a ſpiritual tempeſt of which the natural is a picture. The holy Spirit intended the one ſhould be a natural repreſentation of the other. He gave us the outward image that we might in it ſee the likeneſs of an inward ſtorm. And he himſelf in his own word has applied the outward image to repreſent theſe inward objects, and therefore we have his own infallible application of the text; wherein he ſuppoſes us all to be embarked upon a voyage to the haven of eternal reſt. And we ſailed thither on a ſmooth unruffled ſea, until ſin entered into the world, and raiſed the winds, and made the waves beat againſt us, and a furious ſtorm darkened the face of the ſky, and hid the deſired haven from our ſight. And here the holy Spirit begins his deſcription---" They who go down to the ſea," into the ever moving, buſy, agitated world, which ſin has made like the troubled ſea, " in " ſhips," in worldly ſocieties, oppoſed to the ark of the church, which is but one, " and do " buſineſs in great waters," and are occupied in worldly buſineſs among the crowd, and in the buſtle of worldly men. " Theſe ſee the works " of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep"--- they ſee a full diſplay of his wonderful works in his manner of bringing theſe worldly people into diſtreſs: for he commandeth, all afflictions come by his order and appointment, this eſpecially, which raiſeth the ſtormy wind, which moveth

moveth the ſpirit of the world to oppoſe its own people, and lifteth up the waves thereof to diſtreſs them. Worldly men meet with a ſea of troubles: for the wicked are like the troubled ſea when it cannot reſt: wave after wave beat againſt them, and ſwell and lift up themſelves ſtill higher and higher, until the raging billows break over their heads. And when theſe afflictions come, they are ſo diſtreſſed, their minds are toſſed and agitated, that they can find no reſt. Sometimes they mount up to heaven carried up and ſwelled with ſpiritual pride, then again they go down to the depths, ſunk with diſtruſt and deſpair---their ſoul melteth away, has no ſtability or courage left, becauſe of the trouble. The trouble is ſo great, that the light of reaſon is put out. The boaſted moral ſenſe refuſes to take the helm, and the rectitude and dignity of human nature dare not direct. The religion of nature and the fitneſs of things aided with all the graces and ornaments of the arts and ſciences, and ſet off with the luſtre of claſſical learning, cannot hinder them from reeling to and fro, and ſtaggering like a drunken man. Nay, with all theſe learned and polite accompliſhments, they are at their wits end, quite unable to find out any expedient to extricate them from their diſtreſs.

This is a true picture of man in his natural ſtate. It is drawn by the ſpirit of God, and is the

the likeneſs of every ſon of Adam; for ſin has thrown them upon this boiſterous ſea, and raiſed this furious ſtorm againſt them, and the ſpirit of the world and the devil keep it up in all its fury, and drive its mighty billows over their heads. And they can do nothing to eſcape periſhing in the deep waters. Nothing but death is before them. Oh may the God of mercy open your eyes to ſee your danger, that finding no help upon earth, you may be diſpoſed to look up to him, from whom alone can your ſalvation come! and being thus diſpoſed, then you will follow them in the text, "who cried unto the Lord in "their trouble, and he delivered them out of "their diſtreſſes."

This is the ſecond part of the beautiful painting in the text. Happy was the affliction which made them ſeek help from God: for while the world ſmiled on them, they were apt to forget heaven. But when affliction preſſed ſore upon them, and no human relief offered, the moſt ſtupid and hardened ſinners were then ready to aſk relief from God, and to ſeek him in their diſtreſs, although they had forgotten and deſpiſed him in their proſperity. But no affliction works this happy effect more certainly, than the dangers of the ſea, which are ſo great, and in a ſtorm ſo far out of the reach of any ſuccour, that there are very few, in ſuch a caſe, who do not cry unto God for help. And hence comes the common

common ſaying—" that they, who know not " how to pray, ſhould go to ſea to learn." A ſtorm is an excellent teacher, it forces men to pray, it makes the moſt profane and irreligious look up to heaven, and if they once look up with the prayer of the heart, our God, out of his infinite love, immediately hears and anſwers. " Call upon me, ſays he, in the day of trou- " ble, ſo will I hear thee. And it ſhall come to " paſs, that before they call I will anſwer, and " while they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear." Thus prayer engages the almighty on their ſide, and then nothing is impoſſible to it. Prayer commands the elements---changes the ſeaſons--- ſtops the ſun in its courſe---quenches the violence of fire---and calms the moſt tempeſtuous ſea. You ſaw theſe poor mariners in diſtreſs, they had exerted all their ſkill, and toiled ſo long as their ſtrength laſted, but to no purpoſe: the ſtorm ſtill raged, and grew more violent, ſo that all efforts being in vain they give up their veſſel to the fury of the winds and waves, and then at laſt betake themſelves to their prayers. and the prayer of faith did for them, what the united ſkill and ſtrength of all the men in the world could never have effected. It calmed the wind, it quieted the waves, it ſmoothed the ſea, and carried the ſhattered veſſel ſafe to the deſired haven: for upon their crying to him, " he maketh the ſtorm a calm, ſo that the waves

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" thereof are ſtill, then are they glad, becauſe " they be quiet, and ſo he bringeth them unto " their deſired haven." And this deliverance is to them a matter of great gladneſs. The paſt danger inhances the preſent ſafety---the ſtorm which they have eſcaped now increaſes their enjoyment of the deſired haven: for it is certain we reliſh proſperity better after adverſity, peace after war, and health after ſickneſs. A calm is never ſo pleaſant as after a ſtorm. And while we are taſting the pleaſures of it, how can we avoid acknowledging our deliverance with gratitude.

This is the third part of the painting in the text. So ſoon as theſe mariners are delivered, they inſtantly offer up their ſacrifice of thankſgiving---" O that men would therefore praiſe the " Lord for his goodneſs, and declare the won- " ders that he doeth for the children of men." The wonders, which he had wrought, deſerved their beſt thanks, not only in private, but alſo in public, not only in the cloſet, but alſo in the great congregation. And the holy Spirit in the laſt words calls upon them to exalt their deliverer in the congregation of the people, and to praiſe him in the aſſembly of the elders, i. e. openly, in the face of the church, and if they ſhould neglect this, I appeal unto you all, whether ſuch ungrateful wretches did not deſerve to have periſhed unregarded in the ſtorm.

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I have now conſidered the paraphraſe upon the words, and have ſet before you the lively painting of our natural ſtate, which they contain, and I come, ſecondly, to the ſpiritual uſe and application of them.

The image is this. Mankind before they are redeemed, are like a ſhip in a ſtormy ſea, agitated with paſſions, toſſed up and down with cares, and ſo blown about with various temptations, that they are never at reſt. This is their calmeſt ſtate in the ſmiling day of ſmooth proſperity: but afflictions will come, the afflictions of ſin and ſatan and the world will raiſe a violent ſtorm, which all the wit and ſtrength of man cannot eſcape. He will ſoon be ſwallowed up of the devouring waves; unleſs that ſame God who created the ſea, ſpeak to it, "peace, be "ſtill." We are all in the ſame ſituation the apoſtles were, when they were alone in the evening in the midſt of the ſea, and the wind and the waves were contrary; againſt which they toiled rowing in vain, until Chriſt came to them walking upon the ſea, and commanded the winds to ceaſe, and the waves to be ſtill. Upon which there was a great calm: for they knew his voice, who had ſpoken them into being, and they obeyed. His word is almighty to compoſe and ſtill the raging war of the moſt furious elements. And he is as almighty in the ſpiritual world, as he is in the natural. Into whatever ſoul he enters,

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he commands all the jarring paſſions to be ſtill, and there is indeed a bleſſed calm. O may the almighty Saviour ſpeak thus unto you all, that you may ſail on a ſmooth unruffled ſea, until you arrive ſafe at the deſired haven of eternal reſt!

And now, my brethren, after what has been ſaid in this and the preceding lectures of man's fallen ſtate, let me aſk, what opinion you entertain of it? do you really think, that the image which the holy Spirit has ſet before you this day is true, and drawn from nature? do you indeed believe, that ſin has thrown you upon the wide and furious ocean, that the ſpirit of the world and the devil have raiſed a tempeſt againſt you, and that you are every moment in danger of being ſwallowed up by the mercileſs waves, and that there is no deliverer in heaven or earth, but the Lord Jeſus? if you do not believe this truth, upon what principles do you deny it? not upon ſcripture principles; for it is very common in ſcripture to deſcribe the ſinful ſtate of man under this image. The book of Pſalms is full of it. In the 18th, Chriſt complaining of his enemies ſays, "the floods of ungodly men made me "afraid, but God took me, he drew me out of "many waters, he delivered me from my ſtrong "enemies"—here the many waters and the ſtrong enemies ſtand for the ſame perſons. The 69th Pſalm begins thus—"ſave me, O God, for

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" the waters are come in, even unto my ſoul, I " am come into deep waters, where the floods " overflow me;" and then in the 14th verſe Chriſt prays for deliverance in theſe words, " let " me be delivered from them that hate me, and " out of the deep waters"—the ſame ungodly men who hated him are alſo called deep waters. He prays again in the 144th Pſalm, verſe 7, " ſend thine hand from above, rid me and deliver " me out of the great waters, and from the hand " of ſtrange children." And theſe ſtrange children are compared to troubled waters throughout the Prophets, and even to the end of the New Teſtament. St. James likens the inconſtant wavering man to a wave of the ſea, driven with the wind and toſſed, and St. Jude calls the ungodly infidels raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame. And St. John, in the 17th chapter of the Revelation, has given us a key to open all theſe ſcriptures; he was ſhewn in a viſion the judgment of the great whore that ſitteth upon many waters—and in the 15th verſe, the angel explains the viſion, and ſays, " the waters " which thou ſaweſt, where the whore ſitteth, " are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and " tongues," all the unconverted race of mankind of every nation and tongue.

Theſe ſcriptures are plain and expreſs, and the meaning of them cannot be miſtaken. If

you

you deny the evidence which they give, you muſt deny the plaineſt matter of fact in the world: for if you look upon the troubled face of the ſea, and then look into the working of your own ſouls, you muſt obſerve the moſt ſtriking likeneſs. The mind is as ſeldom ſerene and calm, as the face of the ocean is: various paſſions ſucceeding one another in perpetual fluctuation forbid it to reſt, they are always agitating and toſſing it, opinions are continually changing, tempers ever fluctuating, as wave follows wave, faſhions are never at a ſtand, not only in dreſs, but alſo in learning, one ſyſtem ſtill puſhing out another, ebbing and flowing, like the tide, and even the moral relations, and the moral fitneſs of things, notwithſtanding their metaphyſical eternity, are always fluctuating and changing, and yet always reſtleſs. And it cannot be otherwiſe, becauſe the mind of fallen man is the very picture of the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt, troubled like the ſea, like it cannot reſt, like it caſting up the mire of corruption, and the dirt of ſenſuality, conſequently there is no peace, ſaith my God to the wicked. And is not this altogether the perfect likeneſs of the changeable inconſtant world, whoſe tempers, paſſions, purſuits, and vices, are like the waves of the ſea, ſucceeding one another in perpetual fluctuation and diſorder?

Thus

Thus experience confirms the teſtimony of ſcripture, and by the mouth of theſe two witneſſes the truth ought to be eſtabliſhed. And what farther objection will you make to it? you will not ſay, that you do not find it to be a matter of fact by your own experience. Would to God none of you made this objection: for it does not prove that you are not in a ſtorm, but only that you are ſeized with a ſinful lethargy, and you doze and ſleep on, while the veſſel is ſinking. O my brethren, this is the ſtrongeſt deluſion of ſin, and for the love of God and your own ſouls, awake. You are indeed periſhing, ſee, the waves are breaking in upon you, death is at hand, and will not your own ſafety induce you to ſhake off this lethargy? what a wonderful deluſion is this? ſatan and the world have been crying unto you, peace, peace, when there is no peace; they have lulled conſcience aſleep, and probably have ſeared it with an hot iron, and rendered it paſt feeling. In this caſe you will not feel your danger, although you are juſt ſinking; the waves will ſoon ſwallow you up, and then you will find a ſtorm, when the wrath of the almighty falls upon you, of which the greateſt fury of winds and waves can give but a very faint and imperfect image. God grant you may eſcape it! and may his grace awaken all your conſciences, who ſleep in ſin! may the infinite love of the bleſſed Jeſus open your

your eyes, and ſhew you your danger, that you may be led to cry unto him for deliverance! which is the

Second remark I have to make. And this relates to thoſe perſons among you, who find they are in a ſtorm, and are willing to come to Chriſt, as theſe redeemed of the Lord did in the text, that he may command the winds and the waves, and there may be a calm. If you can but once ſee your danger, you are ſafe: for your diſtreſs cannot be greater than the Redeemer's mercy. Although you find yourſelves ſinking in the mighty waters, yet you have only to cry with Peter on the ſame occaſion, Lord ſave me, and Jeſus will certainly ſtretch forth his almighty arm, and you ſhall be ſaved. If you do but ſee your danger, and out of the deep ſenſe of it cry unto him for help, he will not caſt out your prayer: for he is a God of love, and his love is almighty to ſave. Be your ſins ever ſo great, ever ſo numerous, your danger from them ever ſo imminent, fly but to the altar of his mercy, and take hold of the merits of that moſt precious blood, which was ſhed upon it, and then you are ſafe. For the blood of the lamb of God was ſhed for ſinners, and no ſinner ever fought aright to partake of the merits of it, and was caſt out. I came not, ſays the bleſſed Jeſus, I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. Sinners alone want a Saviour, and

our God was therefore called Jeſus, becauſe he was to ſave his people from their ſins, and he has promiſed in the text, that ſo ſoon as they cry unto him out of the deep ſenſe of their diſtreſs, he will hear and anſwer: for he is always more ready to ſave, than they are to cry unto him for ſalvation. And may theſe conſiderations haſten you to ſeek this help! into whatever diſtreſs ſin may have thrown you, if it has expoſed you to all the ſtorms and tempeſts of the world, yet here is an almighty deliverer. The winds and the waves know his voice, and when he commands, they obey. At his word the jarring elements are ſilent in the natural world, and they will be the ſame in the ſpiritual. If he ſpeak peace unto your ſouls, there will be a calm indeed. The rage of conſcience, agitated by the dark blaſts of guilt, and by the horrible waves of miſery, will preſently ſubſide, all the inconſtant tempers, and ruffled paſſions will be compoſed, and a ſerenity, but little ſhort of heaven, will enſue.

Such is the God of our ſalvation; whoever among you then ſees your danger, and wiſhes for deliverance, come to our God and he will ſave you. Come to the Lord Jeſus, with ſtrong crying and tears, and you have his word for it, that you ſhall find in him an almighty deliverer. O ye poor diſtreſſed ſouls, whom conſcience and

guilt torment, here is your only remedy. Look up to your redeeming God: for his mercy is above your diſtreſſes. Your offences may be great againſt him, but they cannot be ſo great as you will find by faith his love is to you. He loved you even when you left him, how much more will he love you now you are returning? remember what he ſuffered for you: for your ſins he ſweat great drops of blood—for your ſins he endured the torments of his bitter paſſion —for your ſins he bled on the croſs—and for your ſins he died—his love to you was ſtronger than death: and therefore be not diſcouraged at the ſight of your own wickedneſs. He will receive you, be ye ever ſo ſinful; he will not ſhut you out, if ye have been ever ſo ungrateful. Only come to him this day, and let there be raiſed in your hearts a ſtrong cry for his ſalvation. Now try the truth of what you have heard. Seek him with your moſt fervent deſires and earneſt prayers, and ſee whether he be not the almighty Saviour of ſinners. And if you come believing, as theſe redeemed of the Lord did in the text, who when they ſaw no way left to eſcape, at laſt looked up to him, then he will as certainly ſave you, as he did them. O may his bleſſed Spirit put it into all your hearts to ſeek his love, until he bring you to the haven, where you would be, firſt to

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the holy haven of the church militant, and then to the happy haven of the church triumphant! And

After you have received his mighty deliverance, after he has brought you ſafe from the ſtorms of the world, and has calmed the winds, and compoſed the waves, which oppoſed your voyage to the deſired haven, has made you a juſt and holy member of the ark of his church, and has placed you ſecurely in it; after he has done theſe wonders for you, is it poſſible for you to be ſilent in your deliverer's praiſe? while you have a grateful ſenſe of his benefits freſh in mind, you will certainly be celebrating them. You cannot refrain from the juſt tribute of thanks. And this is the third and laſt part of the beautiful painting in the text, "O that men would there-" fore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for " his wonderful works to the children of men." And they who have been in danger, and they who have been delivered, and now live in ſafety and joy, they muſt be telling of his ſalvation all the day long. Their hearts overflow with gratitude and praiſe. Redemption is their favourite ſubject, and the very name of their Redeemer is dear and precious. JESUS is a word that ſounds exceeding ſweet and pleaſant in their ears: they find continual delight in ſpeaking of their redeeming God, and in declaring the wonders which he hath done for their redemption. And

they praiſe him with the gratitude of the heart, and with the thankfulneſs of all the affections, not only in private, but alſo in public, not only with their lips, but with their lives; for the praiſes of a pure and holy life are the beſt ſacrifices of thankſgiving which we can now offer. And may our almighty God and Saviour grant, that every one of you may thus praiſe him! O bleſſed Jeſus! let this ſcripture be fulfilled to day in this whole congregation. Let not one of them depart until they ſee upon what a ſtormy ocean they are all embarked, and what dreadful winds and waves ſin and ſatan and the world have raiſed againſt them. Shew them their danger, that they may fly unto thee for help. And the moment they cry unto thee be at hand, O God of love, to hear and anſwer. And bring them ſafe by thy good Spirit from the ſtorms and tempeſts of this world unto the deſired haven. Bleſſed Jeſus ſay unto our troubled ſouls, peace, be ſtill. Let thy grace calm all our paſſions, and ſo ſmooth all our ruffled tempers, that every one of us may go out of the church in perfect love with thee, and with one another. Hear us, moſt adorable Saviour, and anſwer us to the glory of the Father, and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, three perſons of one undivided eſſence, whom we worſhip and adore now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

PSALM CVII. 33—39.

He turneth rivers into a wilderneſs, and the water-ſprings into dry ground: a fruitful land into barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein: he turneth the wilderneſs into a ſtanding water, and dry ground into water-ſprings, and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation: and ſow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increaſe: he bleſſeth them alſo ſo that they are multiplied greatly, and ſuffereth not their cattle to decreaſe.

IN the former parts of this divine hymn we have ſeen the miſery and diſtreſs of mankind in their fallen ſtate, from which, ſo ſoon as they were made thoroughly ſenſible of it, and humbled under it, our gracious Redeemer delivered them. He came upon their firſt cry, and his almighty arm brought ſalvation. And his love was equal to his power: for he not only ſaved them from their miſery and diſtreſs, which was indeed a moſt adorable act of free and unmerited grace, but he alſo enriched them with his divine and heavenly bleſſings, which, ſince they could never merit, they could therefore have no reaſon ever

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to expect. But mercy is the distinguishing attribute of our Lord Jesus. He is free to pardon---free to give. Whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out, neither out of his love here, nor his glory hereafter. And shall not they, who have tasted of his redeeming love, comply with the Prophet's request in this Psalm? shall not they be thankful? consider from what a depth of misery his free grace has raised them, and then judge how it is possible for them to refuse their due tribute of thankfulness? you saw them first in the wilderness, lost and starving travellers, ready to perish; you beheld them falling into the pit, where the enemy found them, and put them in chains of misery and iron; and how greatly were you moved at the sight of their sickness, when they lay pining away through a total loss of appetite, and were grown so weak and feeble, that death was ready to take them into the prison of the grave, and to shut its gates upon them! and what was the worst of all, the soul was never at rest; sin, which brought them into these miseries, made them still more miserable under them. Guilt would not suffer any of the faculties to be composed, and conscience never knew, what it was to be in a calm. Indeed the whole man, body and soul, were in such a continual ferment, and so distressed for fear of perishing every moment, that nothing in nature could so perfectly represent their situation, as the distress

diſtreſs of mariners at ſea in a violent ſtorm. Theſe are the dark ſcenes, in which the unconverted and unregenerate lay: you have beheld the ſhady part of their picture, now you are to look upon a more agreeable and pleaſing proſpect. Under the image which we are to view at preſent, the holy Spirit has given us a beautiful painting of their deliverance, and we ſee the ſame perſons, who lay in the moſt exquiſite diſtreſs, here placed in the moſt delightful and happy circumſtances. They are brought out of the wilderneſs, and out of the pit, and are healed of all their infirmities, and their conſciences are compoſed and calmed---they are pardoned freely ---made juſt and holy---admitted into the one true church of Chriſt---and bleſſed in it by him with all true ſpiritual graces. O what an entire and happy change is this! God grant, that every unconverted perſon here preſent may experience it! may he turn the wilderneſs into a ſtanding water, and dry ground into water-ſprings, &c. May the love of our almighty deliverer exert his power this day, and fulfil every word of what is here ſaid of the Gentile church in this whole congregation, while I am

Firſt, Laying before you a comment upon the words, and

Secondly, Bringing the doctrine contained in them home to your hearts, by way of ſpiritual application.

The holy Spirit begins with a deſcription of the rejecting of the Jewiſh church, and of the transferring of its privileges and graces to the Gentiles. " He turneth rivers into a wilder- " neſs, and the water-ſprings into dry ground." This paſſage is here applied in a ſpiritual ſenſe. It relates to redemption. And nothing more is neeeſſary to the underſtanding of it, than to remember, that water is in ſcripture, the known and eſtabliſhed emblem of the holy Spirit. What the one does in nature, the other does in grāee. St. John puts the matter beyond all doubt, in his eomment upon Chriſt's words, who had been ſpeaking of the waters which ſhould flow from believers, but this, ſays he, he ſpake of the ſpirit. And the other ſcriptures ſpeak of the ſpirit under the ſame image. A ehurch enriehed with the graees of heaven is compared by the Prophets to a well-watered garden (Iſaiah lviii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 12.) to the paradiſe of God, watered with its four fruitful rivers: for as every thing uſeful and ornamental in the vegetable world is raiſed up by water, ſo is every thing in the ſpiritual world raiſed up by the holy Spirit. And in the Jewiſh church he had cauſed every virtue abundantly to grow; it was nouriſhed with the ſtreams of his divine graee, enriehed with the dew of heaven, and bleſſed with rivers of comfort, inſomuch that it wanted no manner of thing that is good. St. Paul thus enumerates the bleſſings of the

Iſraelites

Iſraelites---" to whom pertaineth the adoption, " and the glory, and the covenants, and the " giving of the law, and the ſervice of God, " and the promiſes, whoſe are the fathers, and " of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came." Rom. ix. 4. And when he came, this once favourite church would not receive him for the promiſed Meſſiah, but rejected and murdered him. For which crime the greateſt part of the Jewiſh nation was cut off, and the reſt according to their own prophecies were diſperſed over the face of the earth, and they will continue diſperſed, until they receive Jeſus of Nazareth for their Saviour and their God. While they juſtify the horrid rebellion of their fore-fathers, who crucified the Lord of life, the veil muſt remain upon their hearts; and it is remarkably upon them at preſent: for they are the moſt ſtupidly infatuated of all people---living without either civil or eccleſiaſtical polity---without a temple---without a prieſt---without ſacrifices---without an atonement---and indeed they are now without a God; becauſe they have rejected the true God, the bleſſed trinity of their fathers, and worſhip they know not what; they have ſet up ſome ſtrange kind of an infinitely extended metaphyſical being, whom they call the one ſupreme God, and who never had any exiſtence but what the enemies of chriſtianity have been pleaſed to give him. Thus they have turned the once fruitful church

church into a wilderneſs. And the holy Spirit here deſcribes them in this ſituation. The church of God, which he had bleſſed with his promiſes, and with his prophets, and had enriched with the continual ſtreams of his grace, was now made barren. When it rejected that God and Saviour, on whom its whole œconomy was founded, then he took away all its privileges and bleſſings, and it has been ever ſince a poor dead barren wilderneſs. Deprived of his grace, it was reduced to the ſame ſtate, which the moſt fruitful country would ſoon be in, if it ſhould be deprived of the rain and dew of heaven: for then nothing could grow. It would become a barren deſart. Apply this to the preſent ſtate of the Jews, and you ſee how God turneth rivers into a wilderneſs, and the water-ſprings into dry ground---and as it follows in the 34th verſe, "he "turneth a fruitful land into barrenneſs for the "wickedneſs of them that dwell therein." This ſcripture is now fulfilled literally, as well as ſpiritually. The holy land has been as remarkable for its fruitfulneſs, as it is now for its barrenneſs: for it was once the moſt fruitful country in the world. The ſacred writers mention the particular bleſſings with which it was enriched. Moſes ſpeaks of it in theſe words: "The country "which thou goeſt to poſſeſs is a land which the "Lord thy God careth for, the eyes of the Lord "thy God are always upon it, from the beginning

"of

" of the year, even unto the end of the year; and " therefore it is a good land, a land of brooks of " water, of fountains, and depths that ſpring " out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat and " barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pome- " granates, a land of olive oil, and honey, a land " wherein thou ſhalt eat bread without ſcarce- " neſs, thou ſhalt not laek any thing in it." And it fully anſwered this deſcription. It was once dreſſed, and eultivated, and flouriſhed, like a fruitful vineyard; but at preſent it lays deſolate and waſte. The vineyard of the Lord of hoſts was the houſe of Iſrael, and becauſe after all his cultivation they brought forth no fruit, therefore he declares, " I will take away the hedge there- " of, and it ſhall be eaten up, and break down " the wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down. " And I will lay it waſte, it ſhall not be pruned " nor digged, but there ſhall eome up briars and " thorns; I will alſo command the clouds that " they rain no more upon it." (Iſaiah v. 5, 6.) This prophecy is now fulfilled. Judea is one entire wilderneſs, over-run with briars and thorns, as hiſtorians relate, and modern travellers teſtify. And the fruitful land was turned into barrenneſs for the wiekedneſs of them who dwelt therein. Wickedneſs was the cauſe of its deſolation. The Prophets had foretold them of their utter extirpation from the promiſed land, if they ſhould reject the Meſſiah when he eame. And he eame

to

to his own, but his own received him not; they oppoſed, blaſphemed, and crucified him, and therefore according to his own predictions they were cut off, and diſperſed over the face of the earth, and the fruitfulneſs of their country was taken from it, and given to the Gentiles, as it follows in the 35th verſe, "he turneth the wilderneſs into "a ſtanding water, and dry ground into water-"ſprings." The heathen nations gladly received Jeſus for their Saviour and their God, and therefore their wilderneſs was turned into a ſtanding water, and their dry ground into water-ſprings; and this happened, when the ſpirit was poured upon them from on high: for then the wilderneſs became a fruitful field, and the deſert rejoiced and bloſſomed like the roſe, it bloſſomed abundantly, and rejoiced even with joy and ſinging. And he enriched the heathens thus abundantly with the ſtreams of divine grace, after he had made them thirſty, and had diſpoſed them to receive the water of life with thankfulneſs: "for when the poor and needy ſeek water "and there is none, and their tongue faileth for "thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of "Iſrael will not forſake them, I will pour water "upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the "dry ground---I will pour my Spirit upon thy "ſeed, and my bleſſing upon thine offſpring, "and they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, "as willows by the water courſes." The prophet

phet Iſaiah is full of theſe images; he frequently compares the heathens, before they received the goſpel, to a deſolate wilderneſs, but after they embraced it, to a cultivated garden, enriched with beautiful flowers, and uſeful fruits, covered at firſt with the moſt fragrant bloſſoms, and afterwards abounding with the richeſt products. and it received all its fruitfulneſs from the rain and dew of heaven. The grace of the holy Spirit was the cauſe of their flouriſhing and bringing forth fruit under the goſpel. His gracious operation is as neceſſary in the ſpiritual world, as the genial influences of warm ſhowers are in the natural. He does the ſame in grace, which they do in vegetation.

The ſcripture teaches us to take our ideas of his operation from this image, and it is very familiar and well underſtood. You all know what are the effects of ſoft gentle rain: you have ſeen it cover the earth in a ſhort time with a moſt agreeable verdure, after it had been parched and burnt up with a long drought. You have ſeen what plentiful harveſts followed a mild dropping ſeaſon, ſo that it might be ſaid without a figure "the clouds drop fatneſs." And you may ſee the influence of the holy Spirit equally fruitful in his province. Look into the early ages of the chriſtian church, and you will ſee how he bleſſed and enriched the firſt converts from heatheniſm; they put forth every bloſſom

bloſſom that is fair and fragrant, and were fruitful alſo in every good word and work: they had been like barren trees in a wilderneſs, without leaves, or bloſſom, or fruit, but ſo ſoon as they were tranſplanted into the church, they began to flouriſh abundantly, and watered with the continual ſtreams of divine grace they brought forth fruit unto eternal life. And thus the wilderneſs was turned into a ſtanding water, and the dry ground into water-ſprings; verſe 36. "and there "he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they "may prepare a city for habitation." And in this fruitful ſoil he placeth the hungry. They wander no more as they did in the wilderneſs, they are no more loſt and ready to periſh; but they here find an abiding city, and are ſecurely ſettled within the pale of the church. "And "they ſow their lands," verſe 37. Our bleſſed Lord has explained theſe words. The ſeed he ſays is the word—ſowing the ſeed in the lands is ſowing the word in the hearts of the hearers. And this was the office of the Apoſtles, and of the ſucceeding miniſters of the goſpel. Indeed the apoſtles were moſt eminent and bleſſed in this great work: for they carried the good ſeed into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. They converted whole provinces and kingdoms to the faith, and they went on ſowing the word without ceaſing, until they had planted it in every wilderneſs upon the face

of

of the earth, and had there watered it with the dew of heaven. O that our almighty Lord would raiſe up in this our day an army of apoſtolical miniſters, who like their predeceſſors have the good ſeed ſown abundantly in their own hearts, and are therefore beſt able to ſow it in the hearts of others! and by the ſucceſs of ſuch men in ſowing their lands may many "vineyards "be planted." A vineyard is in ſcripture the eſtabliſhed emblem of the church, where the true vine grows and flouriſhes. The Pſalmiſt and the wiſe king apply it in this ſenſe, and the prophet Iſaiah puts it beyond doubt in the 5th chapter, where explaining the parable of the vineyard, he ſays, "the vineyard of the Lord "of hoſts is the houſe of Iſrael." And our bleſſed Saviour makes this application of the ſame parable; indeed the Jews themſelves make it: For when he aſked them what he ſhould do to thoſe huſbandmen, who had injured ſome, and ſlain others of the ſervants of the Lord of the vineyard, and at laſt murdered his own ſon, they reply, "He will miſerably deſtroy theſe wicked "men, and will let out his vineyard unto other "huſbandmen." Accordingly he let it out to us. When he deſtroyed the wicked men of the Jewiſh church, he then let out his vineyard to us Gentiles. The Apoſtles came and planted churches among us, and the almighty arm of our God has thus far protected them. O may his grace

grace and favour continue, that we, " may bring " forth fruits of increaſe," as the churches firſt brought out of the wilderneſs did. They brought forth all the fair bloſſoms of an holy life; and they were not like ſome early buds, which are apt to be cut off by cold winds and ſharp froſts, but they had grace to withſtand the ſevereſt ſtorms of temptation, and both to ſet and to ripen their fruit—fruit of increaſe—growing ſtill in grace—increaſing from one degree to another—and perſevering, until they reaped the crown of eternal glory. And thus the laſt part of the beautiful image in the text was compleated—He bleſſed them ſo that they are multiplied greatly, and ſuffereth not the cattle to decreaſe. By the particular bleſſing of the almighty God and Saviour they multiplied greatly, the Lord adding to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved. His grace went out along with the firſt preachers of the goſpel, as he ſtill does with all his faithful miniſters, and he gave them a fortitude, which no danger could intimidate, and a power of utterance, which the adverſary could not withſtand. Inſomuch, that when the poor fiſhermen had been toiling all the night, and had taken nothing; yet when the Lord gave the word, and accompanied it with his bleſſing, they incloſed a great number of fiſhes, even enow to fill both the ſhips, both the ark of the Jewiſh, and the ark of the Gentile church. Then was

his

his promiſe fulfilled, " I will make you fiſhers " of men :" for they caught thouſands at once. The firſt time they let down the net, they took three thouſand, and the ſecond time five thouſand. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. And though this be a day of ſmall things ; yet the Lord's hand is not ſhortened. He can ſtill bleſs us, and make us multiply exceedingly. We ſee ſome happy inſtances of it--- ſufficient to convince us, that if we had more apoſtolical miniſters, who had a ſingle eye to the glory of their adorable maſter, and were inflamed with a fervent love to the ſouls of men, he would ſtill bleſs our labours abundantly. O almighty Jeſus we are here waiting for thy bleſſing, now bleſs us ; and ſince thou haſt promiſed, that the very cattle of thy houſhold the church ſhould not decreaſe, enable us Lord ſo to increaſe, that every part of this ſcripture may be fulfilled to day in this whole congregation. And may his divine grace influence all your hearts, while I am endeavouring to ſpeak unto them under the

Second general head, Which was to apply what has been ſaid.

The words contain a new argument for thankfulneſs, taken from the loving kindneſs of our moſt gracious Redeemer, who found us in the dry barren deſerts of heatheniſm, blind in ignorance, ſunk in vice, and yet wretched as we were, his

mercy was moved at the ſight of our miſery, and his grace flew to our relief. When the Jewiſh church rejected him, and perſecuted his Apoſtles and followers, then he ſent the Romans to deſtroy it. Upon which we were taken into his love and favour---we poor heathens, who lay in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death---we were admitted into his church---watered with his grace---enriched with his bleſſings---and protected by his almighty arm unto this very day. And ought we not to be thankful for ſuch ineſtimable and eternal mercies? ſhould we not ſpeak forth the praiſes of this moſt loving Redeemer, and endeavour to inſpire all the world with gratitude to him? certainly this is a duty moſt right and equitable, and therefore I will make ſome ſhort remarks upon the diſtinct parts of it in the order they are placed in the text. And

Firſt, The holy Spirit here teaches us what a ſituation we were in before God turned away the ſtreams of his grace from the Jewiſh church, and directed them to us. We were in a barren wilderneſs----barren of every thing ſpiritual and divine. Although the heathens flouriſhed in arts and ſciences, were polite and claſſical, although they could form the accompliſhed gentleman, and finiſh the character of the good moral man, although they had excellent ſyſtems of ethics, and knew all the moral and civil virtues, yet if the word of God be true, they were in a wilderneſs.

The

The moſt refined claſſical ſcholars with all their knowledge were in a vaſt deſert: for they knew not Jeſus Chriſt. And without him the moſt poliſhed genius is no nearer ſalvation, than the moſt barbarous ſavage; becauſe without him they neither know the way to heaven, nor if known can they take one ſtep in it. There was a total ignorance among them concerning the divine nature, and concerning the atonement for ſin. And our anceſtors in this iſland were ſunk as low in ignorance and vice as any of the heathens. They were in a wilderneſs, where no ſaving truth grew; but ſuperſtition and idolatry flouriſhed. That we are not ſtill in this ſituation, is entirely owing to the free mercy of our bleſſed Redeemer, who ſent the ſtreams of his grace into our barren hearts. This is the

Second point remarkable in the text. The Pſalmiſt ſays, he ſent waters into the wilderneſs to change its nature, i. e. he ſent his grace into our hearts to change their nature, to ſhew them their dead and barren ſtate, to make them ſenſible of it, diſtreſſed under it, and then cry to him for deliverance. And when grace has thus far diſpoſed the heart aright, and it can pray for more grace, then will our Lord enrich it with abundant ſtreams: for he is always diſpoſed to give in the meaſure we are diſpoſed to receive; and if we hunger and thirſt for much, he has promiſed that we ſhall be filled.

There is no doctrine of chriſtianity more oppoſed than this, nor any at preſent more ridiculed. And until men deſire to have their barren hearts changed, it muſt ſound ſtrange to them, to talk of the neceſſity of doing, what they have no deſire to do. They have found nothing of this barrenneſs in their own ſouls, they do not believe what we ſay of it, and therefore it appears to them like talking of a ſixth ſenſe. But the more inſenſible they are, the greater is their danger. And if there be any of you in this ſtate, thus dozing and ſleeping away your lives in carnal ſecurity, be aſſured that you are yet in the wilderneſs, and the leſs you ſee it, the more barren you are. If you ſee not your hearts covered with ſin and deſolation, Oh! what blindneſs, what infatuation has ſeized you! for until you ſee your natural barrenneſs, you will find no want of grace to amend and enrich the ſoil, and without grace nothing can grow. It is equally neceſſary towards changing and reforming the ſoul, as water is to change and reform the deſolate wilderneſs. And as in its hot dry ſand no vegetable can grow without moiſture, ſo in your barren hearts no good thing can grow without the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: "for without me, ſays he, ye can do nothing." And therefore, my brethren, if you refuſe to believe this doctrine, you muſt act againſt the evidence of your ſenſes. And it will greatly increaſe

creaſe your condemnation, that the ſcriptures have ſet in ſo clear a light the neceſſity of grace, and yet you would not be convinced, but would ſtill obſtinately live and periſh in your barren ſtate, unfruitful, and dead to every good word and work. May God ſhew you, ſince argument cannot, your ſinfulneſs and guilt. O that his bleſſed Spirit would now let you ſee your own hearts, that there may be raiſed in them a ſtrong crying for grace. And if he does bring you to deſire it, the love of our bleſſed God, who has it to give, cannot withhold it: he will bleſs and enrich you to ſuch a degree, that you ſhall bring forth fruits of increaſe. This is the

Third doctrinal point in the text. The ſtreams of divine grace were therefore ſent into the wilderneſs, that its nature might be changed, and might bring forth fruits of increaſe. And into whatever heart grace enters, it makes an entire change and reformation. A wilderneſs improved into a regular and beautiful garden is not ſo great a change: for grace makes the man a new creature. The dead faculties of his ſoul revive---the barren grow and ſhoot forth---the underſtanding bears the faireſt bloſſoms, and the will and affections ripen and perfect the ſweeteſt fruit. Under the genial influence of grace the whole man is, like a tree planted by the water-ſide, always green and flouriſhing, that will bring forth its fruit in due ſeaſon. And whatever fruit is brought

brought to maturity, by the mild and gentle operation of this divine agent, will be acceptable to God the Father. Good works put forth and perfected by grace, are well pleasing to him. When grace has changed our barren hearts and reformed them, by justifying us through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, then are we enabled to proceed in the work of sanctification; but not before: because an unjust person cannot bring forth justifying fruit, no more than a corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit. Our persons must be just and right before our works can be, and the scripture is positive, that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Good works belong to a new creation, and before we can do them, we must be created anew---we must become new creatures in Christ Jesus, and be grafted into him by the living principle of grace, and draw our nourishment from him as much as a branch does from its stock, before we can bear the fruit of any one good work. This is scripture. This is the doctrine of our church. And whatever some proud self-righteous pharisees may fancy, this is the doctrine of philosophy and nature. We have sensible demonstration of it. Take a branch off from the stock on which it grew, and let it lie in the open air, what will it produce? you see it withers and dies. If any man be cut off from Christ, the stock upon which we must all grow, or perish for ever, what will

he produce? hear our Lord's judgment. "As "the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it "abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye "abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the "branches. He that abideth in me and I in "him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for "without me, ye can do nothing." This is the determination of our infallible God, and if you refuse to submit to it, after it has been confirmed by our church, and indeed by the whole Christian church, and by matter of fact, and sensible demonstration, if all this evidence cannot convince you, what will you object to the experience of all living christians, who declare with one voice---"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, "but unto thy free grace be all the praise." This is the language of every true believer, who confesses, that he cannot so much as think a good thought, without the influence of the holy Spirit: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. If this still cannot convince you, may that grace which you oppose work upon your hearts, and convince you effectually; may the giver of all grace shew you your barrenness without it, and dispose you to seek, until you find a thorough change and reformation; and then you will join your grateful hearts with ours, in returning praise and thanks to our God, who has so blessed us with his grace, as to enable us to bring forth fruits of increase:

And

And this is the fourth and laſt remark, which belongs to believers, who know by happy experience the truth of the ſcripture, which we have been conſidering: for the love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt has brought them out of the wilderneſs, changed their barrenneſs by his grace, planted them in his church, watered them with the dew of heaven, and enriched them with all the ſweet fruits of an holy life. In you, my chriſtian brethren, this ſcripture is fulfilled. And therefore you cannot but be thankful. To our deareſt Redeemer you offer up your praiſes with joy and delight. When you conſider what wonders Jeſus hath done for your ſalvation, you cannot be ſilent in his praiſe; but big with a lively ſenſe of the numerous and eternal bleſſings of his free grace, you ſpeak of him with the higheſt ſtrains of gratitude, and yet you find you cannot put forth all his praiſe. You are unable to declare in words, what your hearts feel, and therefore you let your lives ſpeak forth his praiſe, as well as your lips. O may his bleſſed Spirit keep you always in this thankful temper! and may our gracious and moſt adorable Jeſus increaſe daily the number of the thankful! may his grace change and reform the wilderneſs of ſinners hearts, that the good ſeed of the word may be ſown in them, and they may grow and flouriſh in the vineyard of the Lord's church, there bringing forth abundantly the fruits of increaſe! O

almighty Saviour, if there be any in this congregation ſtill in the wilderneſs, now bring them out of it; now water their hearts with the plentiful ſtreams of thy grace, and grant, moſt loving God, that ſome--O if it be but one ſoul, may be added this day to thy little flock, that finding thy bleſſing and thy power preſent among us, we may go on multiplying exceedingly, until the earth be full of the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the waters cover the ſea: and may all redound to the glory of God the Father, and to the honour of the eternal Spirit, the Trinity in unity, whom we worſhip and adore now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON VIII.

PSALM CVII. 39, 40, 41.

Again they are miniſhed and brought low, through oppreſſion, affliction, and ſorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and cauſeth them to wander in the wilderneſs where there is no way. Yet ſetteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

WE left the redeemed of the Lord in the moſt flouriſhing ſituation. After they had been brought out of the wilderneſs, and delivered from the pit, and healed of their infirmities, and ſaved from the ſtorms of vice, they were placed under the tender care of their moſt loving Redeemer. And upon the rejection of the Jewiſh church, he ſent into the wilderneſs the abundant ſtreams of his grace, and there he planted the Gentile church, watering it with his good Spirit, and cheriſhing it with the genial warmth of the light of life: by whoſe influence it grew and ſpread, and was ſo enriched and bleſſed, that it multiplied exceedingly, and became like a well-cultivated and fertile country, where they ſow their lands and plant vine-yards, which yield them fruits of increaſe, ſome an hundred fold, ſome ſixty

ſixty fold, and ſome thirty fold. And this experience of their Redeemer's love is certainly ſufficient to make every one of them thankful, and to excite in their hearts the warmeſt ſentiments of praiſe and gratitude.

In the words which I have read we have a new motive for thankfulneſs, taken from the decline and decay of the chriſtian church. Its fruitfulneſs is now turned into barrenneſs. The ſame country which you ſaw before adorned with the ſweeteſt bloſſoms, and bringing forth the richeſt fruits, covered all over with plenty, is now degenerated again into a wilderneſs. Nothing grows in it but thorns and thiſtles, the fruits of the curſe. This is a melancholy change of the church, and it ſhould move us greatly to ſee it fall back again into the ſame deſolate and wretched ſtate, from which it had been raiſed. But it has been the invariable rule of the Redeemer's providence. He waters the church with his grace, and bleſſes it with the light of his fruitful rays ſo long as men will receive their kind influence. But when they reject them, either by refuſing to make any uſe of them, or by perverting them to a wrong uſe, then he withholds his bleſſings. He withdraws his grace and the light of his countenance, upon which the ſame darkneſs and deadneſs enſue in the church, as would be in the world, if the ſun were to withdraw his comfortable light and heat, and to

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ariſe no more with his reviving beams upon the earth. Thus he turned the fruitful land of the Jewiſh church into a wilderneſs for the wickedneſs of them who dwelled therein. And he transferred their fruitfulneſs to the wilderneſs of the Gentiles. And again he turns our fruitful country into a wilderneſs for the wickedneſs of them, who dwell in it. He began to fulfil this ſcripture by removing the grace and light of the goſpel from the ſeven churches in Aſia, and he has left us in his treatment of them a terrible example of his juſt vengeance upon every wicked infidel church. And he has ſince taken vengeance upon ſeveral other churches. When they refuſed to walk by the light of his goſpel, he then removed the candleſtick from them: and deprived of his light, they could produce nothing but the works of darkneſs, and would certainly be ſentenced to that outward darkneſs, where there is weeping and gnaſhing of teeth for ever. Our church has long refuſed to walk by the light of the goſpel; God grant our candleſtick may not be entirely removed! we do indeed deſerve it. Our crying national ſins, and our open inſolent infidelity call aloud for judgment. O! what mercy muſt dwell in his breaſt, who hears daily multitude of traitors plotting the deſtruction of his divinity, and yet after repeated acts of treaſon, for any one of which againſt the king's perſon they would have been

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juſtly put to death, nevertheleſs ſpares them, and withholds the deſerved puniſhment? but although he be a God of mercy, yet his Spirit may be grieved, and his long-ſuffering may be wearied out. Remember how he deſtroyed the ſeven churches, and behold in what a wilderneſs they now lay, and we ſhall periſh after their example, unleſs we repent. And I hope the conſideration of the ſcripture now before us may by his bleſſing be the means of perſuading thoſe among you, who are his enemies, now to ſue to him for pardon, and to confirm thoſe who have placed their whole truſt and confidence in his merits. As to the former, their dreadful ſituation is deſcribed in theſe words, "again they "are diminiſhed and brought low, through op- "preſſion, affliction, and ſorrow, &c." And as to the latter, they have a ſweet promiſe of his loving protection, even in the greateſt corruption of the church. "Yet ſetteth he the poor "humble chriſtian on high from affliction, and "maketh him families like a flock." While the reſt of the world ſits in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, the people of God have light in all their dwellings. While others are viſited with his plagues and judgments, he ſets his own people on high, out of the reach of affliction, and in the worſt of times he watches over them with the care of the moſt tender ſhepherd, and makes them families like a flock. And theſe

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are the perſons here called upon to be thankful, and if they after ſuch mercies ſhould be ſilent, the very ſtones would cry out, and call them ungrateful.

Let us then meditate upon theſe intereſting words,

Firſt, By conſidering their ſenſe and meaning, and

Secondly, By applying the doctrine contained in them to our ſpiritual uſe and improvement.

And may the bleſſed Spirit go along with us, and enable us to reap all the profit from this ſcripture, which he intended for the faithful by recording it! let us then enquire under his guidance by what means the church, which we ſaw before flouriſhing and fruitful, ſhould now become a deſolate wilderneſs: for the ſame people, who had been in the wilderneſs, and were brought out of it, and placed in the fruitful garden of the church, are again diminiſhed and brought as low, as they were at firſt. They decreaſe in number, and are depreſſed in condition. They who multiplied exceedingly, are again diminiſhed, and they, who were high in every reſpect, are brought low. The faithful are diminiſhed from among the children of men. Oh dreadful change! to be turned from fruitfulneſs into barrenneſs---from a flouriſhing church into a deſolate wilderneſs—from being cheriſhed with the comfortable rays of divine light, and watered

watered with the fertile dew of heaven, now to be deprived of both, are the greateſt calamities which can befal a people in this world. To be thus driven into the wilderneſs again, is worſe than to have been in it at firſt: becauſe after God had viſited them with the grace of his goſpel, and has now withdrawn himſelf in diſpleaſure, there is no reaſon to think, that he will return in mercy to a people, who have abuſed his grace and inſulted his goſpel: after he has long waited to reclaim them, and they ſtill reject the offers of his pardoning love, and ſtand out againſt all his intreaties, obſtinately rebellious, then it will be but juſt and equitable, if he ſuffer them to be again diminiſhed and brought low through oppreſſion, affliction, and ſorrow. Theſe three are the cauſes of the decay of the chriſtian church, and they contain a ſhort hiſtory of that myſtery of iniquity, which now worketh in the children of diſobedience. The firſt cauſe is the oppreſſor, the ſecond is the evil of ſin into which he brings them, the third is the evil of ſorrow and miſery. And it is impoſſible that any church or ſociety ſhould flouriſh, which is under the vile bondage of the cruel oppreſſor and ſin and miſery. Under theſe tyrants it muſt be diminiſhed and brought low.

The firſt we render oppreſſion, but as there muſt be an agent to perform the action, I therefore chooſe to give him his term of office, and

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to call him the oppreſſor. Such an one was Pharoah, who oppreſſed the children of God, and by his hard bondage tried to diminiſh them and to bring them low: and he holds forth to us in his manner of treating the Iſraelites a lively portraiture of a more cruel oppreſſor, who is a declared enemy to all the people of God, and who has been trying to murder them from the beginning. The oppreſſion of this great adverſary was repreſented in Pharoah's bondage: for it was by his inſtigation that Pharoah was ſuch a tyrant over the bodies of the Iſraelites, as he is over the ſouls of all his deluded followers. So that the oppreſſor is a juſt and expreſſive title of the great tyrant the devil. Is not he the oppreſſor of God's people, who brought us all into ſlavery by the original tranſgreſſion, and who leaves no temptation untried to keep us his ſlaves? although he deals in nothing but lies, and murder, yet he keeps the multitude under his infernal bondage, and oppreſſes them with the moſt heavy yoke of ſin and miſery. And when they begin to be uneaſy, and to be galled with the yoke, he tempts and deceives them on with lies, uſes all his cunning wiles, and lays every bewitching ſnare for their deſtruction. And although they are aſſured, that he has no wages to give them, but death temporal and eternal, yet he deludes and leads them on, until he get them faſt bound with the chains of ſin and miſery. And is he

not

not an oppreſſor? Is not ſuch a lawleſs tyrant, who has an abſolute dominion over ſinners, and who exerciſes it with helliſh malice, is not he the great oppreſſor? and ſo far as his tyranny reaches, the church muſt be diminiſhed and brought low. He keeps it under by means of evil, which is the ſecond cauſe of its decline. We render the word affliction, but it ſignifies evil, and properly the evil of ſin, the evils of affliction and miſery which follow ſin are expreſſed in the third cauſe of the church's decay. The great oppreſſor overthrows the moſt flouriſhing church by ſin. This is the ſucceſsful battery he raiſes againſt it, by which he firſt gained, and ſtill keeps his dominion: for ſin cuts off all the ſupplies of grace, which the ſoul might receive from heaven, ſtrips it of its armour, and leaves it quite naked and defenceleſs againſt the oppreſſor's ſtratagems. And a courſe of ſin reconciles men to it, and although they know it muſt end in their eternal deſtruction, yet they never ſeek, nay they are offended, when we preſs them to ſeek, that divine grace, which alone can ſet them free. And is it not the ſtrongeſt of all deluſions, that the oppreſſor ſhould make men chooſe eternal deſtruction? and ſhould force them to work and labour for it, to take more pains to attain a place in hell, than are neceſſary to gain heaven? what bondage can be harder? muſt it not wear them down and bring them

low? for ſin is the cauſe of all evil, and that which ſubjects us to all evil—evil of all kinds, certainly muſt be the vileſt oppreſſion. And it is impoſſible, that any church ſhould be in a flouriſhing condition, which is under the bondage of ſatan and ſin, and thereby ſubject to ſorrow, which is the third cauſe of the decay of the chriſtian church. The word ſorrow includes all the evil effects of ſin upon the body and the ſoul, in time and to eternity: for no good can come wherever ſin is. The prophet Iſaiah gives the reaſon (lix. 1, 2.) "Behold the Lord's hand "is not ſhortened, that it cannot ſave, neither "his ear heavy, that it cannot hear, but your "iniquities have ſeparated between you and "your God, and your ſins have hid his face from "you, that he will not hear." Evil is the cauſe of God's withholding good: "for your iniqui-"ties, ſays he, have turned away theſe things, "and your ſins have withholden good things "from you." And when the good things, which God has to give, are withholden, what can the ſinner find, but miſery and ſorrow? and muſt not miſery and ſorrow wear him down and bring him low? will they not affect his ſoul, as ſickneſs does his body, bringing it firſt down to the grave, and then to the loweſt place of the infernal pit! and thus the church decays. By theſe three cauſes it declines. Chriſt made it flouriſh—the oppreſſor makes it diminiſh. Grace

rendered

rendered it fruitful—ſin renders it deſolate. Through Chriſt and his grace it was happy—by the oppreſſor and ſin it is miſerable. And it is one of the ſtrongeſt proofs and evidences of its preſent low eſtate, that the offices of the church, which were formerly reſpectable, are now become contemptible—" He poureth contempt " upon princes."—The head of the church fulfils his promiſe—" them that honour me, I will " honour, but they that deſpiſe me ſhall be " lightly eſteemed." Be their rank and ſtation ever ſo great, yet if they deſpiſe me and my laws, I will make them deſpicable; their higheſt honours ſhall not keep them from the loweſt contempt, but ſhall expoſe them the more to it, and bring it upon them the ſooner: for they were therefore raiſed to be princes, that they might have it in their power to prevent the decline of the church. Their great offices gave them authority, and their great revenues gave them intereſt, which they ought to have employed for the honour of their maſter; but as they ſuffered him to become contemptible, he therefore poured contempt upon them. " The " prieſts lips, ſays God in the Prophet Mala- " chi, ſhould preſerve knowledge, and they " ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth: for he is " the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts: but ye " have departed out of the way, ye have cauſed " many to ſtumble at the law, therefore have I

" alſo made you contemptible and baſe before " all the people:" ſo long as the prieſts lips preſerve knowledge, he is reſpectable. So long as he has a zeal for his maſter's honour, he is in high eſteem. But when he forgets whoſe ſervant he is, and purſues any one thing in preference to the ſalvation of men's ſouls, then God ſuffers him to fall in the opinion and eſteem of mankind: for his ſovereign Lord and maſter poureth contempt upon him, and " cauſeth him to " wander in the wilderneſs where there is no " way." He, who ſhould teach others the right way, wanders from it, and even the princes are turned into the wilderneſs, where the goſpel at firſt found them. And when the ſhepherds are thus loſt and bewildered, what muſt become of their poor flocks? can the teachers ſhew the ſheep how to keep out of that wilderneſs, into which they themſelves are fallen? how ſhould it be that the blind ſhould lead the blind, and yet neither of them ſhould go aſtray? doubtleſs the ſheep muſt be unhappy, which have a blind ſhepherd over them: for the wolf may prey upon them unmoleſted, whenever he pleaſes, and may devour and diſperſe the whole flock.

This is a faithful account of the general decay of the chriſtian church. Sad experience proves the truth of it. The once flouriſhing church is now turned into a wilderneſs. We ſee it. The whole

whole face of chriſtendom, compared to its former fruitfulneſs, is now a deſert. The light of the goſpel is almoſt extinguiſhed for the wickedneſs of thoſe men, who take upon them the name of chriſtianity, but deny the power of it: for the European churches, proteſtant, and roman, are already diminiſhed and brought low by the great oppreſſor, and by ſin, and by miſery—they are ſo low, that the princes have loſt the reſpect due to their high offices, and are become contemptible, and are now got into that very wilderneſs, from whence the goſpel delivered them. In theſe times of general corruption, the Redeemer might in juſtice take away our candleſtick, as he has done from other churches. But here is the ſubject of praiſe and thankſgiving, that he ſtill continues the light of the goſpel to us. He is infinitely merciful to them, who truſt in him, and be they ever ſo few, ever ſo poor and mean, yet he has given them a moſt ſweet and comfortable promiſe, that when he comes to viſit a wicked infidel church, he will watch over them with the care of the moſt tender ſhepherd, and they ſhall lack nothing—Yet ſetteth he the poor on high from affliction—the poor—the poor in ſpirit---the humble chriſtian he ſetteth on high. He will exalt them of low degree, according to his invariable rule, he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted. " And he will make them families like a flock"---no flock can be more

ſafe

ſafe within the fold, than they ſhall be---regarded by his infinite love, watched over by his all-ſeeing eye, and defended by his almighty arm, they ſhall be ſet on high out of the reach of danger. Though they be few, yet they are as dear to their God as the apple of his eye. Though the world deſpiſe them, yet the Lord Jeſus loves them. Though they be the ſcorn and ridicule of an infidel age, yet he eſteems them more than his own life, for he ſhed his blood upon the croſs to ſave them. Though they be the off-ſcouring of the earth, yet they are the riches of heaven. And when their Lord comes again in all his glory, he will take them into his family, and will admit them into the eternal joys of his heavenly kingdom. How happy then muſt theſe chriſtians be, who are thus bleſſed in thoſe worſt times of the church? and O how thankful ſhould they be, that they were not carried away with the torrent of vice and infidelity! The more wicked the age is, the more are they indebted to the grace of their God, which kept them from the prevailing corruption. And ſeeing nothing but open profaneneſs around them, how can they refrain from the praiſes of their deareſt Lord, who preſerved them from it? certainly they cannot avoid giving him thanks for this great bleſſing, while their hearts feel it; and they will do all that lays in their power to make others partake of the ſame bleſſing, that they may join with

with us in the ſame thanks; O that men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for the wonders that he hath done for the redemption of men.

This is I think the ſenſe and meaning of the text. And it is a very awakening ſcripture, and ought to rouſe up your particular attention: for it offers to your conſideration a moſt intereſting truth, viz. that the chriſtian church would decline from its flouriſhing fruitful ſtate, and degenerate again into the wilderneſs, from whence the Redeemer had taken it. And has this ſcripture been fulfilled? has the chriſtian church been, or is it at preſent in a wilderneſs? let us conſider theſe points under the ſecond general head, and endeavour to improve them to our ſpiritual uſe and benefit. And firſt the flouriſhing church was to be diminiſhed and brought low by the cruel oppreſſor, and by ſin, and by miſery. And God knows it is diminiſhed and brought low indeed, ſo very low, that it is of the Lord's mercy we are not conſumed. And I hope his goodneſs in ſparing us may be the means of converting ſome, and confirming others; if we take a ſhort view of our preſent unhappy ſtate, with reſpect to immorality and infidelity, and conſider how little we deſerved to be ſpared.

As to morals, our people are entirely corrupt. They are beyond the example of former ages, diſſolute

diſſolute and diſhoneſt, inſomuch that his majeſty has more than once recommended it to the parliament to try to put a ſtop to the ſpreading of immorality. But nothing has been done. Nay the want of morals is ſo evident and glaring, that even the teachers of dry morality begin to find it, and have lately complained in public, that after all their moral preaching for near an hundred years, the people are not in the leaſt more moral. And is it not time then to have done with mere morality, ſince we have had ſo much preaching of it, that now we have no morality left? this moral preaching has made our people ſo immoral, that they are got to a pitch of wickedneſs beyond what the very heathens ever attained: for to boaſt of having no virtue or honeſty, to make it a matter of merit to be able to act upon no principle, and to be guided by nothing but intereſt, theſe are the peculiar characteriſtics of the preſent age. And when men thus avow open and barefaced corruption, and, throwing off the very maſk of honeſty, dare appear publickly the rotten advocates for vice, then certainly the church can never be diminiſhed and brought lower, as to morals. And it might reaſonably be expected, that the common people would be thus immoral, ſince the great have ſet them the example, and have entirely caſt off chriſtianity. Men of rank and politeneſs are become too refined and delicate in their

their notions to believe in Jeſus Chriſt. And they have taken away all neceſſity of believing in him by utterly exploding his divinity: and yet they keep up the name of chriſtianity, which is the moſt ſtupid and idolatrous religion that was ever invented, if the author of it be not the true God. It reſts entirely upon the divinity of Chriſt: this is its foundation. Nothing can ſtand without it. But where ſhall we find great and learned men, who believe that Jeſus Chriſt is ſelf-exiſtent, and equal with the father in every perfection and attribute? publickly from the preſs, privately in converſation, you hear this fundamental doctrine of chriſtianity ridiculed and inſulted; and the diſbelief has ſpread, and poiſoned all orders and degrees of men, inſomuch that we have ſocieties erected upon the principle of blaſphemy, with liberty of free debate, as they call it, i. e. with liberty to blaſpheme the Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt. And what is the moſt melancholy point of all, the church and ſtate look on unconcerned, while that God, whoſe ſervants they are, is treated with more inſolent blaſphemy in this city, than the very Jews offered to him at his crucifixion. And are theſe things really ſo? do immorality and infidelity flouriſh thus abundantly among us? If they do, immorality will ſoon pull down our church, and infidelity will dig up the very foundations of it, and then certainly it will be diminiſh-

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ed and brought low. God grant it may not fall lower than it is, but that the few names which are left in it may be kept from falling, and others may daily be added to them. And this we pray for the more earneſtly, that Chriſt may not pour contempt upon princes, which is the ſecond remark.

The church muſt be fallen very low, when its princes are become contemptible: for they were raiſed to great dignity, that they might ſtop the torrent of profaneneſs and unbelief. Their honours and revenues were to give them weight and influence in the ſupport of their maſter's cauſe, and when it was ſinking and like to fall into diſgrace, it was certainly their intereſt then to maintain it with all their might, becauſe if it fell, their diſgrace would not be long after it. But they ſat ſtill and quiet, enjoying themſelves, warm and ſnug in their opulent ſtations, while their maſter was wounded with immorality, and crucified afreſh by unbelief. Although they eat of his bread, yet they ſaw him robbed of his divine glory, and neither uſed their tongues nor their pens in his defence, therefore juſtly did he pour contempt upon ſuch princes. He made them baſe and mean in the eyes of the people. He took away the reſpect due to their high offices, and becauſe they refuſed to defend his divine honour, though they were well paid for it, he therefore made them diſhonourable: for them

that

that deſpiſe me, ſays our God, whatever their ſtation be, ſhall be lightly eſteemed. And has not this happened? look around chriſtendom, and ſee in what church the princes of it are reſpectable. The biſhop of Rome---how low is he ſunk! and his brethren are fallen faſt into diſgrace, and the latter part of this verſe is fulfilling---" He cauſeth them to wander in the wil-" derneſs where there is no way." Chriſtianity at firſt found them in a wilderneſs, and brought them out of it, but now by rejecting Chriſt they are got into it again: for every church without him is deſolation. The fineſt ſyſtem of religon, that the wit of man can dreſs up and delineate, is a wilderneſs without Chriſt. Let it be ever ſo artfully put together, yet unleſs it begin and end with him, it is but a mere deſert. Lay the foundation of it ever ſo deep in the religion of nature, build it up ever ſo ſtrong with morality, and adorn it ever ſo richly with metaphyſics, yet it will be a mere deluſive phantom, and of no uſe but to feed learned pride. As Chriſt is not in it, furniſh it with what you pleaſe, it will want all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, of which the chriſtian church is full: for it is a building made of God, the foundation of it is laid upon the rock of ages, even upon Jeſus Chriſt, and in him alone is it built up and ſupported. And it ſhall ſtand for ever, and be as beautiful as the paradiſe of God, when all human

human ſyſtems ſhall be in ruins: for this ſhall ſurvive the flames of the great day, and all its members with Chriſt at their head ſhall aſcend into the church triumphant with eternal glory. And then they who built a religion without Chriſt will be turned away into a wilderneſs indeed---even the wilderneſs of mere moraliſts, of the prophane and the infidel, into the place appointed for their eternal reception and torment.

O what a melancholy and terrible ſtate of things is this! and now let us conſider, thirdly, how the proſpect of it ought to affect us. And whatever our condition be, I think it muſt affect us greatly: for what grief of heart muſt it be to every true believer to ſee the church which once flouriſhed and multiplied exceedingly, now thus diminiſhed and brought low---to behold the intereſt of their ſovereign Lord loſt, and his princes contemptible, how afflicting is the thought! but it is indeed diſtreſsful, when the danger comes nearer to us, and we ſee the once fruitful church become a wilderneſs. Such as the poor ignorant heathens were before Chriſt came, ſuch are we like to be, with this heavy circumſtance to add to our miſery, that they wiſhed and longed for what we reject. They ſaw their want of a Saviour, and embraced the good tidings of the goſpel with great joy. But we want no Saviour. Natural religion is enough for

for us. And the goſpel in any other light, than as a ſyſtem of morality, is abſolutely rejected. Thus we are in a worſe condition by refuſing Chriſt's offers of mercy, than the poor heathens were; and conſequently our wilderneſs will be more diſmal and melancholy than theirs. And how ſoon our church may be turned into this wilderneſs God only knows: but of this I am certain, that we deſerve it, and we have lately had many loud calls to prepare us for it, and ſome of his judgements are ſtill heavy upon us, and unleſs they lead us to repentance, we muſt periſh. Our deſtruction is at hand. And while our national ſins are crying aloud for vengeance, O let every one of you, who have any intereſt in the Saviour of the world call aloud unto him for mercy. Let us pray without ceaſing for the continuance of his bleſſed goſpel among us. And let this conſideration inflame our hearts, and add zeal to our devotion, that our Lord has promiſed to ſet the poor chriſtians on high, out of the reach of affliction.

This is the fourth and laſt remark which belongs only to believers, who are of Chriſt's family and flock. Let the times be ever ſo bad and corrupt, they ſhall be ſafe---let the times be ever ſo tempeſtuous, they ſhall be ſet on high out of the reach of the ſtorm. His grace ſhall keep them from corruption, and his almighty power ſhall defend them from the diſtreſſes of the times. What a ſweet promiſe

promiſe is this, and how full is it of conſolation! God grant you may all taſte the comforts of it, and then you will be thankful indeed. You will ſee how gracious a maſter we ſerve, and you will have reaſon to bleſs his holy name. He will pour down upon you, not contempt, but the riches of his free and unmerited graces: by which you will find, that though the chriſtians be few, and poor and mean, though the church be diminiſhed low, yet the head of it is ſtill the almighty God. Jeſus has all power in heaven and earth, and he can give his followers, however the world may deſpiſe them, ſuch joys as the world has not to give, and ſuch, thanks be to him for it, as the world cannot take away. And theſe joys he here promiſes to them who are of his family and flock. And we know that he is faithful who hath promiſed. We have experienced his faithfulneſs. God grant you may all experience it this day, that you may happily begin the new year. And though the weather be dull and cloudy like the ſtate of the church, and the ſun has not appeared for many days, O may the day ſtar ariſe, and ſupply his place in all your hearts with a better light—and then you will go away thankful. And may the mercy of our moſt adorable Saviour be extended to this whole church and kingdom, as well as to this congregation. O may he ſend out his grace to reform the morals, and his good Spirit to ſtop

the infidelity of our people. Bleſſed Jeſus, ſpare them a little. Now the ſound of the goſpel is heard in our land, be pleaſed to accompany it with thy bleſſing; and if they to whoſe ears it is brought ſtill reject it, then indeed they will deſerve deſtruction. But in thy wrath, O think upon mercy. Spare thy people, O Lord, ſpare them, and turn not thine once fruitful heritage entirely and finally into the wilderneſs. Hear us, thou God of love, and anſwer our prayers to the glory of the Father, and the eternal Spirit---the Trinity in unity---to whom be equal honour, and worſhip, and praiſe for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON IX.

PSALM CVII. 42, 43.

The righteous ſhall ſee it and rejoice, and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth. Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.

THE holy Spirit finiſhes this divine hymn with theſe words. He here ſums up the argument, and makes the application. His ſubject is thankſgiving. The argument uſed to inſpire us with thankfulneſs is taken from redemption. And ſince redemption is the greateſt bleſſing, which the almighty has to beſtow upon his creatures, it is conſequently the ſtrongeſt argument for their thankfulneſs. In order to ſhew the greatneſs of the bleſſing, the all-wiſe author of this Pſalm has painted under ſeveral images the exquiſite diſtreſs and miſery of mankind, before they were redeemed. And theſe images are juſt and expreſſive. They are founded in nature and drawn to the life. And all the redeemed of the Lord have ſeen their loſt eſtate by ſin, which is repreſented under theſe images, and can bear their teſtimony to the truth of the repreſentation: they remember when they wandered in the wilderneſs out

out of the way---when they fell into the bondage and priſon of ſin---and were there ſore diſeaſed with its plagues---and always uneaſy and diſturbed, like the troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, toſſed and agitated with the ſtorms of vice. The retroſpect of theſe miſeries now makes them thankful to their redeemer, who ſhewed them the way out of the wilderneſs, by enlightning their underſtanding, who delivered them from the priſon and bondage of ſin by juſtifying them with his moſt precious blood, and he ſent his word and healed them of all their plagues, by ſanctifying them with the holy anointing of his good Spirit, and thus he calmed and compoſed all the ſtorms of vice, which had threatened their deſtruction. And then he placed them in the ſecure haven of the church, where they flouriſhed and multiplied exceedingly. In the early ages of chriſtianity this part of the Pſalm was fulfilled, when the firſt preachers carried the ſound of the goſpel into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. But in theſe latter days the church is again diminiſhed and brought low by the cruel oppreſſor, and by ſin, and by miſery. Theſe are the three cauſes of its decay, and they have now reduced it into the ſame wretched ſtate, into which it lay before it had the knowledge of redemption. But in theſe times of reproach and blaſphemy the Redeemer has ſtill a ſmall flock left, over whom he

watches with the care and affection of the moſt tender ſhepherd. And when he comes to deſtroy a wicked infidel church, he will ſet theſe poor humble chriſtians on high, out of the reach of affliction, and will make them families like a flock. " The righteous ſhall ſee it and rejoice, " and all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth. Whoſo " is wiſe, and will obſerve thoſe things, even " they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of " the Lord." God grant that every one of us may be wiſe to obſerve thoſe things, and that we may have the true experimental underſtanding of the loving kindneſs of the Lord: and then we ſhall be able to join our thankful hearts and voices with the church militant and triumphant, and to aſcribe praiſe, and honour, and glory to Jeſus our redeeming God. And may the eternal Spirit now be preſent among us, and direct our hearts by his grace, enabling us to finiſh our meditations upon this Pſalm, with that thankfulneſs and gratitude, with which he intended it ſhould inſpire us. And may this be the happy effect of our conſidering.

Firſt, The ſenſe and meaning of the words, which contain the application of the whole Pſalm. The righteous ſhall ſee it. The word here rendered righteous is not what the ſcripture ommonly uſes to ſignify righteous or juſtified perſons; but it is another word, and conveys another idea. It ſignifies to direct, to ſet right; and the righte-

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ous here mentioned are they who are directed in the right way, and walk, as Enoch did, with God in his way, and not in the way of the world. And theſe ſhall ſee the goodneſs and mercy of God's dealings with the fallen race of men. They ſhall have eyes to ſee the ways of his providence. The ſame grace, which ſet them right, will manifeſt to them the reaſonableneſs of the plan of redemption. They ſhall ſee and admire, and be thankful for, the wonders of his redeeming love, which are recorded in this divine hymn. While they read it, their own hearts will bear teſtimony to its truth; for it is a lively picture of their own ſtate and condition. They well remember the time, when ſin miſled them, held them in bondage, and ſubjected them to all its diſeaſes and ſtorms: but ſo ſoon as they had a deep ſenſe of their miſery, and were diſpoſed to ſeek the Redeemer's mercy, he was at hand, a God to ſave. When they cried unto the Lord Jeſus in their trouble, he delivered them out of their diſtreſſes, and gave them a free and full redemption. Finding all this fulfilled in their own ſouls, have they not great reaſon to rejoice? the righteous ſhall ſee it, and rejoice. It ſhall be to them a matter of ſolid laſting joy; not like the crackling of thorns under a pot—a flaſhy tranſitory joy, which ariſes from a light vain mind, and which the world can give and take away; but the chriſtian joy is the fruit of the

ſpirit, produced by his gracious working upon the heart, ſhewing it the dangers which it has eſcaped, and the happy ſtate into which it is brought, from whence ſprings what the ſcripture calls joy in the holy Ghoſt: becauſe it is entirely his gift. Nothing but his grace can enable ſinners to rejoice in the Lord always, which we find they can: for this is the happy ſtate of every pardoned ſinner, that he can rejoice in God; ſo ſoon as he is admitted into Chriſt's kingdom, he is filled with peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt. The ſenſe of Chriſt's redeeming love adminiſters to him joy unſpeakable and full of glory: as he told his apoſtles, "Ye "ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be "turned into joy, and your heart ſhall rejoice, "and your joy no man taketh from you." Every believer has found the truth of this ſcripture. After they had ſeen their loſt eſtate by nature, and their ſouls were filled with anguiſh and bitterneſs at the ſight of their guilt and miſery, they cried unto the Lord Jeſus for deliverance, and he came. His infinite love brought him with haſte to ſave them, and he turned their ſorrow into joy, giving them reaſon to rejoice with a gladneſs of heart, which no man can take from them. O! may the love of the almighty Jeſus beſtow this joy upon every one of you, and he will not withhold it from you, if you ſeek it. If you can but deſire it, you will find him

him more ready to give, than you are to aſk it. He ſhed his blood to purchaſe it for you; he bought it with an ineſtimable price, and the ſame love which diſpoſed him to die, rather than you ſhould be without this joy, ſtill diſpoſes him to beſtow it. Go therefore to the throne of his grace. Aſk, and ye ſhall have. And will you not go to him for it? will you not receive it upon theſe eaſy terms? have you no deſire to attain that joy, which Chriſt alone can give? no deſire to be pardoned, to be made juſt and holy, and to be filled with the fruits of the ſpirit, love, joy, and peace? if any of you are in this wretched condition, ſtop—reflect a moment—and conſider, what enemies you are to your own enjoyments, for you cannot live without joy. And what is your conſtant ſubject of rejoicing? if it be any thing in this world it is imperfect in its kind. You know it by experience. And it endures but a ſhort time, and then it periſhes, and you with it. And will you prefer this empty deſtructive joy, to that fulneſs and perfection of joy, which Jeſus Chriſt has to give? Be ye aſſured, there is no true cauſe of rejoicing, but in him; and nothing that deſerves the name of joy, but in the knowledge of what he hath done for our ſouls. And would to God I could inform you perfectly of this knowledge: for if you had clear ideas of it, you could not avoid ſeeking and praying for it; but it is indeed beyond

deſcription.

deſcription. Joy in the holy Ghoſt is an earneſt and a foretaſte of heaven. O! may you ſeek until you find it, and may the bleſſed Spirit bring you into the happy number of the righteous, who ſee the wonders which the Redeemer has done for their ſalvation, and therefore rejoice. And when their joy is full, then all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth: the ridiculer and the blaſphemer ſhall be ſilent. They ſhall be ſtruck dumb, and not able to open their mouths againſt the Lord and againſt his Chriſt. They will no longer be able to object to that gracious plan of redemption, by which our God decreed to bring many ſons unto glory: but all iniquity—all—without exception—every infidel champion, every treaſonable ſociety, every congregation of rebels ſhall ſtop their mouths. Lord, when are we to ſee this much-deſired day! O when ſhall the blaſphemers of Jeſus be ſilent! when ſhall it be no longer ſaid, that God our Saviour is not ſelf-exiſtent, and equal in every perfection and attribute with the Father? when ſhall the infidel ceaſe to tread under foot our moſt adorable God, and the wicked ceaſe to crucify him afreſh? not I fear till the end: for while there are evil men, there will be railing and blaſphemy. But there will be a day, when iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth, and it is not far off. When our Lord ſhall come again in all his glory, then they ſhall look upon him whom they have

have pierced, and they ſhall ſee that the crucified Jeſus is a God indeed; the luſtre of his divine glory, infinitely beyond the brightneſs of the ſun, will be to them inſufferable, and confounded, abaſhed, ſilenced, they ſhall lay their hands upon their mouths. And when he pronounces the dreadful ſentence upon them, never, never, to be reverſed, "go ye curſed into "everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his "angels," then they ſhall not have one word to object---all iniquity ſhall ſtop her mouth.

Until this great day come, it is every chriſtian's part and duty to defend his Redeemer's cauſe: but it is more particularly incumbent upon us, who have taken his commiſſion and are his miniſters, to exert ourſelves in his defence. Actuated by zeal for his honour, and by love to theſe precious ſouls, for whom he died, we ſhould be unwearied in our labours. Every talent and gift, with which we are bleſſed, ought to be devoted to the promoting of his intereſt, and we ſhould ſtrive to bring as many as we poſſibly can over to it. And every perſon we gain is ſtopping one of the tongues of iniquity. And if we gain but few, yet we may bring ſuch arguments in defence of the plan of redemption, that we may ſilence many. I hope the arguments in this Pſalm will ſilence ſome. If they were well conſidered, they would ſilence all. And therefore we muſt call upon men and

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preſs them to conſider what is here ſaid: for the holy Spirit in the laſt words requires it of us. "Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve thoſe things, "even they ſhall underſtand the loving kind-"neſs of the Lord." "Whoſo is wiſe," has the true wiſdom that is from above, "will ob-"ſerve thoſe things," will carefully note and remark what is here ſaid of the fall and recovery of mankind, of our ſtate by nature and by grace. True wiſdom conſiſts in obſerving theſe two things, what we are in ourſelves, and what we are in Chriſt; in a deep ſenſe of our miſery by ſin, ſtirring us up to ſeek our remedy in the Redeemer. This is wiſdom. And whoſoever is thus wiſe unto ſalvation "ſhall underſtand "the loving kindneſs of the Lord" ſhall be able to apply what he underſtands of it to his own private uſe and benefit. The verb in the original rendered "ſhall underſtand," is, in the conjugation, called Hithpael, which ſignifies to act upon itſelf. Whoever obſerves thoſe things properly, finds his own intereſt in them. He makes the underſtanding of them uſeful to himſelf. He does not ſtudy them as a ſcience or theory, but as intereſting points in which he is nearly concerned, and which he therefore tries to bring home for his own private advantage. When he hears of the mercies of the Lord Jeſus recorded in this Pſalm, he deſires to partake of them. When he hears of the great deliverances vouch-

vouchſafed to ſinful ruined man, he ſtudies to have his own ſhare in them. What is ſaid of theſe perſons, who wandered out of the way in the wilderneſs, and fell into the bondage of ſin, and were afflicted with its diſeaſes, and troubled like a ſtormy ſea with its continual tempeſts: all this he knows was his own caſe, and therefore what follows of their flouriſhing ſtate after Chriſt delivered them may be his alſo, if he cry unto the Lord, as they did, for help. And he never ceaſes praying and ſeeking, until the bleſſed Jeſus bring him to the haven of the church, where he would be. And if he find the church diminiſhed and brought low, he is not diſcouraged; but relies on the promiſes of his God, who will ſet him on high out of the reach of public calamity, when he comes to deſtroy an infidel church. He obſerves what is ſaid in this Pſalm concerning thoſe things; and he knows it to be true, by his own experience. And therefore the loving kindneſs of the Lord here recorded is to him a ſubject of exceeding great joy, becauſe he has taſted of it. Whoſo is wiſe will bring his knowledge of this Pſalm home to his own heart, and he ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord, he ſhall be able to apply what he underſtands to his own benefit, and ſhall therefore be continually praiſing the Lord for his goodneſs, and declaring the wonders which he hath done for the ſalvation of men.

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And here the holy Spirit ends, recommending to us the obſervation of thoſe things, as the only wiſdom, and exhorting us to apply what we underſtand of them to our own particular benefit, as the only uſe we can make of them. And if we can but obſerve and underſtand, until we find our intereſt in them, then his deſign in recording this Pſalm will be anſwered, and we ſhall be thankful indeed: for thankfulneſs is only expreſſing with the mouth what the heart feels, and if the heart feels itſelf entitled to the bleſſings of redemption, it will be impoſſible to reſtrain the tongue from praiſing the almighty God and Redeemer of the world. The redeemed ſoul can no more forbear to praiſe its Redeemer, than the body can forbear to breathe, ſo long as there is any life in it.

You may remember, that I ſet out at firſt with a general plan of the whole Pſalm, and I need not here repeat it. You have heard each part explained, and have been ſhewn how each tends to carry on the general plan. You have ſeen how regular and beautiful it is altogether; how important the ſubject, how ſtrong and ſtriking the arguments. It is indeed a maſterly painting of our loſt eſtate by ſin, which is here repreſented in various lights, the more forcibly to affect us, that finding our diſtreſs, and being diſpoſed to cry out for deliverance, we may be the more thankful to the Redeemer, when he comes and brings

brings us free and full redemption. For this end the holy Spirit inſpired the Pſalm, and for the ſame good purpoſe we have been conſidering it. God grant we may not have conſidered it in vain. It is a very weighty and ſolemn ſcripture, and contains the moſt powerful motives, which infinite wiſdom itſelf could propoſe, both to convince us of our miſery without a Redeemer, and alſo of our happineſs in him, and theſe moſt powerful motives ought certainly to produce the greateſt effects, they ought to fill our hearts with gratitude, and to raiſe us to the higheſt pitch of thankfulneſs; but if we have no better diſpoſitions to be thankful to our bleſſed Redeemer, than we have had before we heard theſe motives, there muſt be ſome very bad cauſe in our own hearts: what it is I will endeavour to find out by applying myſelf,

Firſt, To them who diſbelieve the ſtate of the caſe as it is laid down in this Pſalm. The ſubject is thankſgiving. The motives uſed to excite in us a thankful temper are taken from the diſtreſſed eſtate of mankind by nature, and from their perfect recovery by grace. And no man can be unthankful, who has ſeen himſelf in this loſt condition, out of which he was brought by the free grace and mercy of the Redeemer. Such a perſon I ſay cannot be unthankful: becauſe while he retains the ſenſe of his former miſery, and of his preſent happineſs, his mind is always

always in a thankful temper, and he muſt loſe this ſenſe, before he can be indiſpoſed to give thanks and praiſe to his redeeming God. This is the clear and plain ſtate of the caſe. And the holy Spirit ſuppoſes, that the proper conſideration of it would be ſufficient to inſpire us all with thankfulneſs: for when he comes to ſum up the argument, he ſays, "whoſo is wiſe," whoſoever has the true wiſdom, "will obſerve "theſe things," will obſerve the great points treated of in this divine compoſition, and will endeavour to underſtand them in a practical way, by applying what he knows of them to the ſtate of his own ſoul. And whenever he is thus wiſe, and has this right underſtanding, then he will be full of thanks and praiſe to the God of his ſalvation. Now there are men among us, who diſbelieve all this, who deny the loſt and fallen eſtate of mankind, and who talk of I know not what fancied dignity and rectitude in poor ſinful worms; and although they ſee the whole face of the earth covered with ſin, yet they will not allow that man is ſinful. And thus they deny the very evidence of their ſenſes, when it makes againſt infidelity, and are therefore greater enthuſiaſts, than miſtaken religion ever did produce. A poor creature, who believes without evidence, is indeed an enthuſiaſt; but the infidel, who diſbelieves againſt evidence, is got to the very top of enthuſiaſm. All deiſts

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are rank enthuſiaſts, and of the worſt kind: becauſe they can refuſe to believe their own ſenſes, when they give evidence for chriſtianity. If there be any of them in this place, I muſt call upon them to obſerve thoſe things, which are recorded in this Pſalm. Conſider, why you diſbelieve them. What reaſon, what motive have you? if you would ſubmit to the authority of ſcripture, it has determined, that we are altogether corrupt and abominable, and that there is none of us righteous, no not one. And if the experience of all ages had any weight with you, it comes in confirmation of the ſcripture authority. If plain matter of fact could convince, if reaſon was heard, you could not deny the corruption and depravity of human nature: for nothing is more certain, than that the man lives not, who never ſinned. And if you ſee not that you yourſelves are ſinners, you are in great darkneſs. The eyes of your underſtanding are as yet blind. For what elſe can be the cauſe, why you ſhould have no eyes to ſee thoſe things, which are certain, yea ſelf-evident to every chriſtian? You have no deſire to find the truth of them. I appeal to your own hearts, whether this be not the true cauſe. It is not want of evidence to convince, but want of deſire in you to be convinced. Though the ſun ſhine ever ſo bright and clear, yet it can give no light to them, who ſhut their eyes againſt it. None are more blind, than they who

who will not ſee. Nothing is more difficult, than to perſuade a man to believe, what he is unwilling to believe. Reaſon and argument are ſeldom ſucceſsful againſt ſuch ſtrong prejudices, eſpecially when theſe prejudices fall in with our natural corruptions, and flatter our ſinful pride, and pay their court to the dignity of our baſe nature. In ſuch a caſe ſomething more powerful, than reaſoning is neceſſary. To convince ſuch perſons is a work too great for any agent, but the grace of God; and if after all that has been ſaid, there are ſtill men among us, who ſee not ſin and miſery enough in their own hearts to want a Redeemer, may his good ſpirit open their eyes, before it be too late, and ſhew them the truth of this Pſalm, and bring the doctrines contained in it home with power to their hearts, that they may find their loſt eſtate by ſin, and their perfect redemption through Jeſus Chriſt. And with my fervent prayers for them to our gracious God I conclude, for the preſent, and turn myſelf in the

Second place to them, who believe what the holy Spirit has here recorded, concerning the fall of man, and who deſire to experience the truth of what is here ſaid concerning his recovery. Go on, my beloved brethren; you have ſet out well; perſevere in your deſires and prayers: for you are not far from the kingdom of heaven: it is God who hath begun a good work in you, let him finiſh it.

it And as the proper means thereto, wait upon God, in all his holy ordinances, and particularly obſerve thoſe things; remark the great points treated of in this divine hymn: ſtudy to underſtand them, and to apply them to your own hearts; labour to find your intereſt in them, and be aſſured that God will accompany the devout meditation of this ſcripture with his grace and bleſſing. Whoſo is wiſe will obſerve thoſe things, ſays the holy Spirit, therefore if you would be wiſe, obſerve them. Mark, learn, and inwardly digeſt them. Try to find in them ſpiritual nouriſhment and ſupport, and if you conſider them with humility and prayer, they will be greatly bleſſed unto your ſouls. Wait and perſevere in theſe holy exerciſes, and in God's own good time you will find reaſon to join with all his redeemed people, and to declare that he is loving to every man, to you in particular, and that his mercy endureth for ever. And theſe are the happy perſons, to whom I addreſs my

Third and laſt remark. You, my chriſtian brethren, are prepared to join with me, in offering up our tribute of thanks. You know what the Redeemer has done for your ſalvation, and you are grateful; but you are not grateful enough; neither can you be. Our moſt adorable God condeſcended to do ſuch miracles for your redemption, that he deſerves far more thanks than you

you can pay. Your beſt ſervice, what a poor return is it for the riches of his love? and your higheſt ſtrains of praiſe, how far do they fall below his infinite deſerts? alas! what can we do in the way of return, ſince all we have is his free gift, and all we hope for comes from his free grace. The ineſtimable riches of earth and heaven, while they proclaim the love of Jeſus to us, yet prove that we cannot praiſe him enough for them. And indeed we never praiſe him ſo well, as when we ſtrive to do the beſt we can; but yet find how little it is we can do, how empty and worthleſs our beſt praiſes are. God knows, our preſent adoration and praiſe in their utmoſt fervour are very imperfect. And the Redeemer is ſo great and infinite, and ſo eternal are the bleſſings which he has freely conferred upon us, that our praiſes muſt be infinite and eternal, if they riſe up to his merit: for eternity itſelf will acknowledge that Jeſus is above all bleſſing and praiſe, and therefore we are to praiſe him for ever. And how then can we riſe up to the greatneſs of his merit in time, ſince there is to be no end of giving him thanks; but though our praiſes be imperfect, yet our Lord requires them, and we muſt return him the beſt we can: and when we know his love, and taſte of his mercy, the heart will feel more than the tongue can utter, and then our praiſes will be acceptable: and his grace will render them ſweet and delightful to us,

and we ſhall eſteem theſe moments to be the pleaſanteſt in our lives, which we ſpend in giving thanks to the bleſſed Jeſus, the author of all our joys. And this kind of praiſe is ſomething like the praiſes of heaven. It has their ſincerity, but not their perfection: May God enable us to increaſe in both! O that we could raiſe our hearts, and exalt our affections to that heavenly frame, with which the glorified ſpirits are now praiſing the lamb, who ſitteth upon the throne. The holy Spirit can tune our hearts to join in harmony with theirs, though in an humbler ſtrain; and let us now ſeek his gracious influence, and beg of him to bleſs theſe lectures upon thankfulneſs, and to make them the means of rendering every one of us more thankful to our moſt adorable Redeemer. The means may be weak, but he who is to give them his bleſſing is almighty, and if we aſk and ſeek it of him in humble prayer, he will ſupply all their defects by his grace. Let us then agree to requeſt him to ſend his good Spirit into our hearts, that we may reap all the profit from the conſideration of this divine hymn, which he intended it ſhould adminiſter to the faithful. And I know of no words more truly devout and pious, nor more proper wherewith to conclude theſe lectures, than the general thankſgiving of our church.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy ſervants, do give thee moſt hum-

ble and hearty thanks for all thy goodneſs and loving kindneſs to us, and to all men. We bleſs thee for our creation, preſervation, and all the bleſſings of this life; but above all, for thine ineſtimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: for the means of grace, through him, and for the hope of glory. And we beſeech thee, give us that due ſenſe of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we may ſhew forth thy praiſe, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourſelves to thy ſervice, and by walking before thee in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom, with thee, and the holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

THE

SURE FOUNDATION:

TWO

DISCOURSES,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

APRIL 11*th*, 1756,

IN THE

MORNING AT ST. MARY's,

AND IN THE

AFTERNOON AT ST. PETER's.

Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner Stone, a ſure Foundation. He that believeth ſhall not make haſte. ISAIAH xxviii. 16.

THE

SURE FOUNDATION.

SERMON I.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

IN every undertaking it is the principal point to lay and to ſecure a good foundation. In temporal concerns, all men ſee and acknowledge this truth, and are careful enough to act agreeably to it. The men of buſineſs, of pleaſure, and of ambition, have each their foundation to build upon, from whence they promiſe themſelves ſucceſs. The learned alſo have their data, and firſt principles in every art and ſcience, which are laid down as a ſure foundation, whereon the art or ſcience may be built. The chriſtian in like manner has his foundation. Divinity has its firſt principles, with this manifeſt advantage above the arts and ſciences, that God hath built it,

it, and upon one plain ſimple truth, which is clearly aſcertained both in the Old Teſtament and the New, Jeſus Chriſt being propoſed in both as the only foundation of faith and obedience. This one ſure foundation is laid, and no other can be laid: "For other foundation can "no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus "Chriſt." What words can be more clear and deciſive than theſe are, and yet the miſtakes of men about them are endleſs, even of men who allow the divine authority of this very paſſage? The papiſts have multiplied the one foundation into a great number, building upon the Virgin Mary, as much as they do upon the ever bleſſed God her Saviour, and upon a multitude of fabulous ſaints. And the Arians and Socinians, the peſts of this age, have been trying to dig up the foundation, and would willingly leave no traces of it remaining. And ſome of the reformed churches, which ſet out well at firſt, laying Chriſt, and Chriſt alone for the foundation, have ſince built upon him, wood, hay, ſtubble, and ſuch like reprobate ſtuff, which, when it comes to be tried in the fire, will be burnt. And the generality of men have no foundation at all, but live careleſs and unconcerned about the ſtate of their ſouls, never examining whether they are built upon Jeſus Chriſt, the rock of ages, on whom the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. Each of theſe miſtakes

miſtakes has at preſent numerous advocates, ſome of them have great intereſt, and others have enjoyed a long eſtabliſhment, and the eſpouſers of each have ſomething ſpecious to offer in its defence, which being dreſſed up with the ornaments of falſe learning, and falling in with our own corrupt inclinations, is very apt to ſeduce us from the foundation of truth. For theſe reaſons it will be proper and ſeaſonable to look to the foundation, and to ſee whether we ſtand ſecure upon it. In this enquiry, the words of the text will be uſeful; they are ſo plain and clear, as to leave no doubt in every honeſt teachable mind, which is willing to be determined by the authority of the written word, and hears and reads it under the guidance of its all-wiſe inſpirer. St. Paul is here reproving his Corinthians for the envying and ſtrife, and diviſions, which were among them. He had converted them to the faith, and Apollos had built them up in it, and they had great reaſon to join together in giving praiſe and glory to God, who had called them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. But the common enemy of their ſouls prevented this deſirable effect, by ſowing diſcord among them. He tempted them into a party ſpirit, and they divided about the gifts and talents of their miniſters. One ſaid that he was of Paul, another that he was of Apollos; and they forgot, that neither is Paul

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that planteth any thing, neither Apollos that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe. All the glory of planting and watering, as well as of the increaſe is God's. For we, ſays the Apoſtle, are only labourers together with God. Although by our miniſtry the good ſeed was ſown in your hearts, yet ye are God's huſbandry. Although by our preaching ye were built up in your moſt holy faith, yet ye are God's building. We could do nothing without his grace: for according to the grace of God, which is given to me as a wiſe maſter builder I have laid the foundation. This wiſe maſter builder laid the foundation, when he converted them to chriſtianity, and he cautions every miniſter of the goſpel to take heed how he buildeth thereon, becauſe there was but one foundation on which all doctrines and duties reſted—" for other foundation can no man lay, " than that is laid." The foundation is the entire ground-work of religion, upon which every part of it muſt reſt. The whole building is to ſtand upon it, and therefore it ſhould be laid ſecure. Certainly it cannot be too ſtrong and firm, which is to ſupport our preſent and our eternal happineſs. Look at this tempeſtuous world, and behold what rains deſcend, what floods come, what winds blow, and beat upon our weak tabernacle, threatening its fall, how can we ſtand againſt theſe mighty aſſaults, unleſs we be founded upon a rock? For our comfort God

God hath laid a foundation, againſt which the gates of hell ſhall not prevail, and therefore we need not doubt of its ſtability or duration. He laid it firſt in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and ſure, when he purpoſed before all worlds, to bring many ſons unto glory through Jeſus Chriſt. He afterwards revealed his purpoſe in the written word, and he hath therein laid but one foundation, and there is no other. Moſes and the prophets have laid no other foundation in the Old Teſtament than what is eſtabliſhed throughout the New, which is Jeſus Chriſt, on whom we may ſafely build all our hopes of ſalvation, becauſe he is God and man united in one Chriſt, who came as our repreſentative, to act and ſuffer for us, and thereby to reſtore us to the happy eſtate which we had forfeited by the fall. As man he obeyed the divine law to atone for our diſobedience, as man he ſuffered what we ſhould have ſuffered for diſobeying; but then his obedience and ſufferings could never have wrought out perfect righteouſneſs for a guilty race, unleſs the holy ſuffering Jeſus had been united to the moſt high God, and God and man had been as intimately united in one Chriſt, as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man. The merit of all that he did and ſuffered, reſts upon his being a divine, as well as a human perſon. Take away his eternal ſelf-exiſtent Godhead, and you ſink him down into a mere

mere creature: and then place him ever ſo high, ſuppoſe him to be at the very top of the ſcale of creatures, yet you make him finite; and being ſo, cloath him with every grace and perfection ſhort of divine, he could ſave no per[illegible] but himſelf, for it is an adjudged caſe upon record, that no man can redeem his brother, or pay to God a ranſom for him.

The divinity then of Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation on which the whole of our ſalvation reſts: for there is ſalvation in none other, and if he be not true and very God, there is no ſalvation in him. Our preaching is vain, and your faith in him is alſo vain. We are all yet in our ſins, for nothing ſhort of divine and infinite can ſave us from the guilt and power of them. But the ſcripture has clearly revealed his divine and infinite nature. It has not left us in doubt concerning the power of the ſon of man to forgive ſins. The Saviour of ſinners was Jehovah, a perſon of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence; for we are taught by the chriſtian verity to believe, that in the unity of the Godhead there are three perſons of equal glory and co-eternal majeſty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, who were pleaſed to diſplay their attributes and perfections, by ſuſtaining diſtinct offices in the œconomy of man's redemption, to whom we therefore owe equal glory and worſhip, becauſe their love to us in ſuſtaining theſe offices for our recovery was equal. God the Father was glori-

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fied by having honour paid to his holineſs and juſtice. He demanded full and perfect ſatisfaction for ſin, which God the Son paid by taking upon him the human nature, and therein obeying and ſuffering for ſinners: for which ſtupendous act of love and condeſcenſion, he was ſeated upon the throne, and had all power in heaven and earth committed to him, and he is now glorified by all the heavenly hoſt, angels and archangels, and by the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, thouſands, thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand, a great multitude whom no man can number. Glory be to his holy name, for that his courts will be filled with ſuch an innumerable company, aſcribing ſalvation to our God who ſitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. And God the Holy Ghoſt is glorified for abiding with us, even unto the end of the world, to carry on the work of ſalvation, for awakening the dead in ſin, enlightening them with the light of life, and guiding them in their chriſtian courſe by his grace, until he bring them unto glory. Thus God the Father demands ſatisfaction---God the Son pays it---God the Holy Ghoſt applies it---but ſtill in theſe offices the glory is equal, becauſe the perſons are equal. If the Son was not equal to the Father, how could he pay him an infinite ſatisfaction? If the Holy Ghoſt was not equal to the Father and the Son, how could he ſuſtain his office, which

which requires an all-wiſe, all-preſent, and almighty ſpirit? Theſe diſtinct offices make no difference or inequality between the perſons, as it is well expreſſed in that form of ſound words to which we have all ſubſcribed, "In the holy, "bleſſed, and glorious Trinity none is afore or "after other, none is greater or leſs than ano-"ther, but the whole three perſons are co-eter-"nal together and co-equal." Jeſus Chriſt is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and being a truly divine as well as an human perſon united in one Saviour, in this character every thing he did and ſuffered for us muſt be perfect and complete. Nothing can be wanting to make him a ſure foundation. When he obeyed---when he ſuffered---when he died---he was paying the ſatisfaction demanded by the juſtice of the Father, who demonſtrated his acceptance of it by raiſing the manhood from the dead. And then the foundation of God was eſtabliſhed immoveably. God himſelf, even God manifeſted in the fleſh, is the foundation that ſtandeth ſure. It is neither the bleſſed virgin, nor the ſaints and martyrs; it is neither repentance nor good works; neither morality nor natural light, but the one foundation is the God-man, Chriſt Jeſus. As God, he is almighty: for he created all things, and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. As God manifeſted in the fleſh he has engaged to uſe his almighty

mighty power for our ſalvation. In his obedience and ſufferings, death and reſurrection, he laid a foundation that can never be ſhaken, upon which ſinners may ſafely build their hopes of pardon and forgiveneſs, of righteouſneſs and holineſs, of heaven, and eternal glory. And they may build on him with greater ſafety, becauſe the ſcripture throughout ſets him forth as the only foundation. He is laid, and other foundation, the apoſtle ſays, can no man lay. There is an utter impoſſibility of laying any other: becauſe to attempt it, would be oppoſing the immutable decree of heaven, by which this one foundation was laid in the covenant of grace; it would be oppoſing God's revealed will, which has eſtabliſhed this one foundation in the written word; and it would be oppoſing the ſufficiency of Chriſt's obedience and ſufferings, by which alone we can obtain acceptance with God the Father. Will not theſe men be found fighting againſt God, and how then can they ſucceed, who oppoſe his covenant, confirmed by his revealed will, and eſtabliſhed by his miraculous works? So long as this ſcripture ſtands upon record, it will overthrow all their attempts to lay any other foundation. Will the metaphyſician think of laying his reaſon and the light of nature? It is written, Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the moraliſt think of laying a ſyſtem of ethics, and the

the religion of nature? Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation, and there is no other. Will the Arian, Socinian, and other infidels think of being juſtified without the merits of the God-man? Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation, and there is no other. In ſhort, every doctrine and duty ſtands eſtabliſhed upon him. He is the foundation of all: "for other "foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, "which is Jeſus Chriſt."

The ſcope and deſign of the words thus in part opened and explained, offer to our conſideration the following truths:

Firſt, Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all ſaving knowledge.

Secondly, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

Thirdly, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Fourthly, He is the foundation of all preſent and eternal happineſs. And may the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus direct our hearts to make a right uſe of this ſcripture under the Firſt Particular, which was to prove, That he is the foundation of all ſaving knowledge.

By ſaving knowledge I underſtand all the knowledge which reſpects the ſalvation of ſinners. And man, in his fallen ſtate, neither has any of this knowledge, nor can he attain it by any means in his own power. His reaſoning faculties in their higheſt refinement could never have

have diſcovered to him, how he might be pardoned: for when ſin cut him off from all communion with the Father of ſpirits, who is to the ſoul what the ſun is to the body, it then deprived him of all ſpiritual diſcernment, and without the light of revelation he is unable to diſcover thoſe objects, which can only be ſpiritually diſcerned. He is blind and ignorant in the things of God, and obſtinate too in his ignorance. He is in the dark, and he loves darkneſs; and being a ſlave to the prince of the powers of darkneſs, he is taught to hate the light; and he hates it with a perfect hatred. He flies from it, leſt his works ſhould be manifeſt, and their horrid deformity ſhould fill him with ſhame and painful conviction. While he is in this condition, and every man is in it by nature, the eyes of his underſtanding have no more perception of any ſpiritual object, than his bodily eyes would have of material objects, if there was no light to enlighten them. The organ of ſight would remain, but then without light it would be of no more uſe than if it was quite deſtroyed. The ſcripture has given us a melancholy account of this ſpiritual darkneſs and blindneſs, and repreſents it to be ſo far above the power of nature to remove, that it was one principal end of Chriſt's coming from heaven to preach recovery of ſight to the blind. And to enable him to recover it, the ſpirit of the Lord was poured out upon him without meaſure: for

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it required the power of an almighty ſpirit to cure the obſtinate blindneſs of a ſinful world, who loved darkneſs rather than light. Read the firſt chapter of the Romans, and you will there find, what horrid deeds of darkneſs were, and always will be the fruits of nature, when left to its own fancied light. The apoſtle does not ſcruple to declare of the refined taſte of this polite claſſical people, " that they were become " vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh " heart was darkened." The imagination of their fineſt poets---even Virgil's imagination, St. Paul being judge, was vain. And Tully with his great parts, with his vaſt reading, and all his attainments, had a fooliſh heart, St. Paul being judge, and in the things of God was exceeding dark. And this was true of the reſt of the heathen world, as well as of the Romans. When St. Paul received his commiſſion from Jeſus Chriſt, it run in theſe words---" I ſend thee to " the Gentiles to open their eyes, and to turn " them from darkneſs to light." And accordingly we find it the principal ſubject of his preaching and writing, to call them out of darkneſs into the marvellous light of the goſpel. His Epheſians he cautions iv. 8.) " not to walk as " other Gentiles in the vanity of their mind, " having the underſtanding darkened, being " alienated from the life of God through the " ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the " blindneſs

" blindneſs of their heart." And leſt this darkneſs and blindneſs ſhould be ſuppoſed to take place only in the heathen world, the ſcripture has expreſsly declared it is the caſe of every ſon of fallen Adam---of whom not one in his natural ſtate can attain to the knowledge of ſaving truth, " for the natural man receiveth not the things of " the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto " him, neither can he know them, becauſe they " are ſpiritually diſcerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. And for want of this ſpiritual diſcernment, the apoſtle ſays, that the natural man, that is, every man in a ſtate of nature, not only does not, but alſo cannot, there is an abſolute impoſſibility that he ſhould, know the things of the ſpirit of God. Nay, when they are propoſed to him, they appear to be fooliſhneſs, and he receiveth them not.

But why need I multiply texes in defence of a truth, for which ſcripture ſpeaks ſo plain, and matter of fact ſpeaks for itſelf. It is an undoubted truth, that there was no ſaving knowledge in the heathen world. We therefore call it heathen, becauſe it wanted this chriſtian knowledge. What diſcoveries did the claſſical ages of Greece and Rome make in the doctrines of ſalvation? Rather, what had they not done to obliterate the ſcope and intent of the ceremonies, which God had inſtituted to keep up the knowledge of theſe doctrines? the very traces of them

were ſo entirely loſt, that among the numerous altars in the famous univerſity of Athens, there was but one erected to any thing like divinity, and that was to an unknown God. St. Paul made an excellent uſe of this inſcription, taking occaſion from it to preach chriſtianity to the Athenians, and aſſuring them that this God confeſſedly unknown was Jeſus Chriſt: and if a faith in him, that purifies the heart, and that works in an holy life, be the baſis of ſaving knowledge, then neither Greeks nor Romans had any of it: for in none of their authors do we find the leaſt mention made of the nature, virtue, and efficacy of the purifying faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

And this matter of fact is confirmed by every day's experience. Are we not forced to teach children the firſt rudiments of letters, and as their minds open, the firſt rudiments of ſaving knowledge? is not a chriſtian education every where acknowledged to be neceſſary, as well to reſtrain and ſubdue the headſtrong paſſions of corrupt nature, as to inſtil the wholeſome truths of chriſtian faith and obedience? And are there not in every country, ſchools and univerſities founded for theſe laudable purpoſes? And when we leave theſe places of education, does not every good ſteward of the myſteries of God ſtill find the neceſſity of continual ſtudy and application to the written word, that he may be able out of

his treaſure to bring forth things new and old for his own and his people's inſtruction in righteouſneſs; and theſe circumſtances may convince us, that we are naturally blind and ignorant in the ſaving truths of the goſpel. We know only as much as we are taught. Without the light of revelation, the inhabitants of England would be no wiſer in the things of God, than the inhabitants of the deſerts of Africa--the ſame ſpiritual darkneſs would cover both lands, the ſame groſs darkneſs the people. And whether they be polite or ſavage it makes no difference, until the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe to diſpel their heavy night of ignorance: for what the ſun is to the natural world, ſuch is Jeſus Chriſt the ſun of righteouſneſs to the ſpiritual world. The ſcripture hath ſet him forth as the only light of the ſpirits of men, from whom all ſaving knowledge muſt flow: for he was made unto us wiſdom, ſays the apoſtle. In his divine nature wiſdom, perfect and infinite wiſdom is eſſentially inherent. He is the all-wiſe God, in whom are ſtored all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, which he was pleaſed, as our Saviour, to open for our uſe and to communicate. The word of God moſt high is the fountain of wiſdom, from whom by the covenant of grace it was to flow; and ever ſince the fall it has been flowing in the richeſt ſtreams. And from him every ſinner muſt be enlightened before he can enter into

the light of life: for he ſaid of himſelf, "I am "the light of the world;" and he muſt fulfil his word by enlightening every dark benighted ſoul, until the number of the elect, the children of light ſhall be perfected, aed then he will ſhine for ever in the fulneſs of glory in the heavenly Jeruſalem: for the glory of God ſhall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and the nations of them that are ſaved ſhall walk in his light for ever and ever. Thus the light has been and always will be the glorious title of the incarnate God. He took this name to denote his gracious office of enlightening our blind and dark underſtandings. Under this character the prophet Iſaiah ſpeaks of him (ix. 2.) "The people "that walked in darkneſs have ſeen a great "light, they that dwell in the land of the ſha-"dow of death, upon them hath the light "ſhined." Theſe words are applied to Chriſt by an infallible interpreter. St. Matthew makes them relate to Chriſt's being a light to lighten the Gentiles. And again in the ſame prophet the Lord ſaith (xlix. 6.) "It is too little a thing "that thou ſhouldſt be my ſervant to raiſe up "only the tribes of Jacob, and to reſtore the "preſerved of Iſrael, I will alſo give thee for a "light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be "my ſalvation to the ends of the earth." Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. 47.) apply theſe words to Chriſt: he was the true light, the day-ſpring from

from on high that viſited the Gentiles, to give them the knowledge of ſalvation, for if the eyes of them who ſit in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death be ever opened, if they ſee that they have loſt the way to heaven, if they deſire to walk in it, and are enabled to go on ſteadfaſtly unto the end, all this is the work of that divine light, in whom whoſoever believeth ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.

From theſe ſcriptures it is evident, that every man who cometh into the world is by nature dark and blind in the things of God. Sin blinded his eyes, and left him without the leaſt ſpiritual diſcernment. The intellectual faculty indeed is not totally deſtroyed. The organ of ſight is not annihilated. It remains, but not enlightened. It is in the ſame ſtate our eyes would be, if the ſun, moon, and ſtars were to withhold their ſhining, and not one ray of light was left in the creation. If men could live in this groſs darkneſs, the organ of ſight would not be deſtroyed, but it would be quite uſeleſs. All things would be inviſible, becauſe whatſoever doth make manifeſt is light. And this is the ſtate of the ſoul: for the eye of the ſoul can no more ſee without its proper light, than the eye of the body can ſee without its proper light. And what the ſun is to the body, that is Chriſt to the ſoul. He is the light of the world, not of this outward world, which is abundantly ſupplied from the fountain of created light;

light; but he is the light of the ſpiritual world, which lay in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, until he aroſe with healing under his wings, and brought with him from heaven the reviving light of life.

Upon the authority of God's word theſe truths are eſtabliſhed. The evidence for them is clear and full. If our bodily eyes cannot ſee without light, it is equally certain, that our ſpiritual eyes cannot ſee without Chriſt: becauſe both are ſpoken of in the ſame language, and under the ſame expreſſions. And as he is the Lord God omnipotent, he is certainly able to enlighten the darkeſt ſoul; and as he is God incarnate, he is engaged to do it. He will uſe his almighty power, and if he give the word, "Let there be "light," there will be light. Upon the ſtrength of this evidence we muſt believe, that it is the name, and the office, and the glory of Jeſus Chriſt, to be the light of the faithful through this dark wilderneſs of ſin and ſorrow.

Convinced of this, there is an important enquiry to be made, without which our conviction will be of no uſe, and that is, Have we reduced it to practice? Since Chriſt is the foundation of all ſaving truth, have we been led to ſeek it from him, and him only? In our ſtudies of divine learning do we always read the ſcripture with humility and prayer, deſiring in the royal Pſalmiſt's words, which are devout and ſhort, and

which

which contain an excellent prayer always to be uſed before we open a bible, " Lord open thou " mine eyes, that I may ſee wondrous things in " thy law." And in our ſtudies of human learning have we taken Chriſt for a light to guide us and to bleſs us, that we might attain more underſtanding than the aged. Rather have we not robbed the eternal light of his name, and office, and glory, by ſeeking ſaving truth from the light of nature? If God be true, and the ſcriptures which I have read be his word---nature is dark and blind. To talk of the light of fallen nature, and all nature is fallen, is more abſurd than to talk of the darkneſs of light. There cannot be a more wicked contradiction to God and his word, to experience and matter of fact, than for men profeſſing chriſtianity to talk about the light of ſinful dark and blind nature: neither can there be a greater inſult offered to the incarnate God, than to ſeek that light which he was made incarnate on purpoſe to give, from metaphyſics, or any ſcience, that pretends to manifeſt ſpiritual objects without revelation: neither can there be a greater crime, than to think of ſeeing and reaſoning *à priori,* becauſe this is God's incommunicable attribute, of which he is ſo jealous, that for pretending to it we were all caſt out of paradiſe. In honour then to the God whom we worſhip, and out of love to our own ſouls, let us talk no more of the light of fallen nature;

nature; let us degrade the unnatural ſcience of metaphyſics, and forget all abſtracted reaſoning; they can give us no light in the things of God, but what is borrowed, and it is fainter than the fainteſt ſtars; and were they brighter than they are, yet when the ſun ariſes, his ſuperior luſtre hides their pale and glimmering rays. God be praiſed, the ſun of righteouſneſs has ariſen among us in perfect beauty and falſe ſcience is hiding her head. He ſhines with his noon-day glory upon this highly-favoured church. Long may he ſhine unrivalled by any fancied light of fallen nature. And may his brighteſt beams enlighten this univerſity, that every member of it, guided by his word and ſpirit, may receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.

If it ſhould be enquired, in what manner Chriſt enlightens the ſpirits of men, whether it be in ſome certain regular way, or he has left no ſure direction in this caſe: The anſwer is, God has eſtabliſhed the means of grace for this very purpoſe, of which his word is the principal: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the "law is light:" And when his good ſpirit accompanies the hearing or reading of the word, then it is indeed a lantern unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. Then the word diſcovers to us the wretched darkneſs of our natural ſtate, ſtrips reaſon of all its high and divine titles, and thereby

thereby humbles us before God, and brings us low before his footſtool, waiting upon him in all the means of grace, and particularly in prayer, that the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt may ſhine into our dark and ſinful hearts. To expect this light without the uſe of the inſtituted means is enthuſiaſm; and to expect to keep this light, after you once have it, without continuing in the uſe of theſe means, is the very madneſs of enthuſiaſm. In them God has promiſed to be found of thoſe that ſeek him. Out of them you have no promiſe; and you may as reaſonably hope God will create a new light for you to read by in the night, as that he will enlighten you without the eſtabliſhed means, without prayer, and the word and ſacraments. And therefore whenever you are tempted to entertain ſuch hopes, be aſſured it is a deluſion of the devil's, and beware at the peril of your ſouls, leſt the light which you ſuppoſe to be in you be darkneſs: for remember it is written, "Woe be unto them, "that put darkneſs for light, and light for dark-"neſs." In order to keep clear of this woe, let us wait in the uſe of the appointed means, and then we may with truth and ſoberneſs expect, that Chriſt will enlighten us with all ſaving truth, and particularly with a full and practical conviction of that great truth, which I propoſed to conſider in the ſecond place, viz. That Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all acceptance with God the Father.

The

The ſame ſinfulneſs which darkened the faculties of the ſoul, and ſeparated us from God, ſtirred up his holineſs and juſtice and truth againſt us. Againſt theſe attributes we had ſinned, and they were become our enemies, and until they received full ſatisfaction, God the father would not accept us. He declared under the law that he would accept nothing in atonement but what was perfect, and perfection is not in the ſinner. The ſacrifices were to be without blemiſh. This was the ſtanding rule—" Whatſoever hath a " blemiſh, that ſhall ye not offer, for it ſhall not " be acceptable for you—and whoſoever offereth " a peace-offering or a free-will offering, it ſhall " be perfect, to be accepted, there ſhall be no " blemiſh therein." (Lev. xxii. 20, 21.) This was both to ſhadow out the abſolute perfection of our holy, harmleſs, and undefiled high-prieſt, who ſhould by the one offering of himſelf make a perfect ſatisfaction for ſin, and alſo to convince the ſinner of his utter inability to make any ſatisfaction: For the ſinfulneſs of his nature, and the ſinfulneſs of his life would render every thing he could do imperfect and ſinful, until he ſhould be accepted in the beloved.

Men are not much affected with the ſinfulneſs of their nature until Chriſt enlighten them. Sin which firſt blinded their eyes, by its deceitfulneſs keeps them blinded. And although the fountain of iniquity, the corrupt heart within, is always

ways ſending out filthy ſtreams, yet it gives them little uneaſineſs until the divine light break in, and lay open to view its impurity. Then the ſinner finds and confeſſes, that he is by nature a child of wrath. He freely ſubſcribes to the ſcripture account of the corruption of mankind, as it is deſcribed by Moſes and the prophets, and expreſsly treated of in the 14th and 53d Pſalms, upon which St. Paul has given us a comment in the 3d chapter of the Romans, and he ſums it up in theſe emphatical words: "for all have ſinned "and come ſhort of the glory of God."

If any doubt ſhould remain concerning the meaning of theſe ſcriptures, our church has removed it in her 9th article, where ſhe determines, that "original ſin ſtandeth not in the "following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly "talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the "nature of every man, that naturally is engen-"dered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man "is very far gone from original righteouſneſs, "and is of his own nature inclined to evil, ſo "that the fleſh luſteth always contrary to the "ſpirit, and therefore in every perſon born into "the world it deſerveth God's wrath and dam-"nation." This is a truly ſcriptural account of man's ſinful and guilty ſtate by nature, to which add the ſinfulneſs of his life, and you ſeparate him ſtill farther from God: For what man is he that liveth and ſinneth not? And ſin is the tranſgreſſion

tranſgreſſion of the law—and the law is holy, juſt, and good—it is ſo pure and ſpiritual, that it cannot overlook the leaſt offence. It muſt have perfect unerring obedience in thought, word, and deed, or it puts the offender under the curſe: for it is written, "Curſed is every one, "who continueth not in all things that are "written in the book of the law to do them." You muſt continue (without intermiſſion) in all things (not keeping nine commandments and breaking the tenth, not keeping them all outwardly, and breaking them in thought) that are written in the book of the law to do them; not only to purpoſe well, and to make good reſolutions, but you muſt alſo do and execute them, or the law can ſhew you no mercy. And which of us has kept the law in this perfect manner? Who can ſay, that he never offended in thought, word, or deed? Certainly every mouth muſt be ſtopt, and all the world muſt plead guilty before that righteous judge, who trieth the very hearts and reins.

Now God has already paſt the decree againſt a ſinful nature, and againſt a ſinful life. "The "ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall die." God is faithful and juſt to fulfil his decrees—he is almighty to execute them—and what can man do under a ſtate of guilt and condemnation to reverſe them? Two things are requiſite, each of which are as much out of his power as to create a world.

He

He muſt firſt change his own nature, which is like the Ethiopian's changing his ſkin, and he muſt be renewed in the ſpirit of his mind with every ſweet and holy temper. And then this change wrought by himſelf muſt make a full ſatisfaction to the holineſs of God for his paſt pollution, to the juſtice of God for the violation of his laws, and to the truth of God, that he may be true, and yet remit the threatened puniſhment. But alas! man has neither will nor power to change his nature: who can ſay I have made my heart clean—I am pure from my ſin? No man can truly ſay, I have done it: for it is God's work. To create a clean heart, is as great an act, as to create the heart at firſt; and accordingly we find the prophet praying to God for it—" Create in me a clean heart, O God, " and renew a right ſpirit within me." And until God create a clean heart, how can any thing clean proceed from it? Who in an impure nature can do a pure action? Who under the curſe of the law, and under the ſentence of condemnation, can perform a meritorious ſervice? Who by his own works can attain ſuch perfect unſpotted righteouſneſs, that God the father will accept him in virtue of it? The ſcripture hath determined that there is none righteous, no not one, and that by the deeds of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified; and our church has determined the ſame in her articles and homilies,

affirming

affirming that we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, and not for our own works or deſervings.

A great part of the miſtakes in religion ariſes from men's not attending to theſe truths. They have not a deep conviction of their loſt eſtate by nature, which occaſions their not ſeeing in its proper light the neceſſity of their recovery by grace. The malady of a ſinful heart is not painful enough to make them apply to the ſovereign phyſician: nor is the burden of a ſinful life heavy enough to perſuade them to ſeek the comfort of this ſcripture---"Come unto me, all ye that are "weary and heavy laden, and I will give you "reſt." But when conſcience alarms them, when guilt terrifies, and they read the ſentence of condemnation paſt upon them in the law, then helpleſs and miſerable in themſelves, with tranſports of joy will they receive the glad tidings of the goſpel, which diſcovers to them how they may be reconciled to an offended God. To ſuch perſons, whoſe eyes the Lord has opened to ſee their guilt and their miſery, the goſpel ſets forth Jeſus Chriſt as the ſole foundation of their acceptance. We are ſaid to be accepted in the beloved; who came in our nature to work out that perfect righteouſneſs for us, which infinite holineſs, and juſtice, and truth required, and which we could not by our

our own power attain; but by the merits of his obedience, ſufferings, death, and reſurrection, he is able to cloath us with the immaculate robe of his righteouſneſs, in which we ſhall be preſented before God the father without ſpot of ſin unto ſalvation.

It muſt be always remembered, that our Saviour was God and man united in one Chriſt; by which union whatever he did and ſuffered for us became truly divine and infinite. Jeſus ſhed his blood, and the ſcripture ſays it was the blood of God. Jeſus died for us, and the ſcripture ſays, that God laid down his life. In what ſenſe can theſe expreſſions be underſtood, unleſs the Godhead and manhood were united in one perſon? This fundamental doctrine of God's being in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf muſt never be forgotten, when we are ſpeaking of the merits of Chriſt's actions and ſufferings. Our nature was impure and corrupt, the imaginations of our hearts were only evil continually. Chriſt came in a pure ſpotleſs nature, ſeparate from ſinners, that whatever he did for them might appear without blemiſh before God the father. He began his miniſtry with reſiſting the devil, and all his temptations, to atone for our yielding to them; for us he conquered, and from his conqueſt, grace is derived to the faithful to reſiſt all his temptations. Then he obeyed the law; its purity, its ſpirituality, its extenſiveneſs, could find

find in him no tranſgreſſion in thought, word, or deed. Its higheſt demands were anſwered: for according to its utmoſt rigour, "he continued in "all things that are written in the book of the "law to do them." And thus he redemed us from the curſe of the law, and as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous. Then he humbled himſelf to ſuffer what we ought to have ſuffered for our diſobedience. The holy innocent Jeſus bore our griefs and carried our ſorrows throughout the ſcene of his bitter paſſion. See him on the eve of the crucifixion in the garden, alone, proſtrate upon the cold ground, in an extreme ſharp night, and lo! at the ſight of that load which he was going to take upon him, a præternatural ſweat flows through his raiment, and falls to the ground in great drops. Oh curſed ſin! with what an holy hatred ought we to crucify thee, ſince the proſpect only of the number and guilt of our ſins, and the wrath and vengeance of the father due to them, forced our bleſſed Lord to ſweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. Being apprehended, he came as a free ready victim to bear thoſe ſufferings, of which we cannot form a perfect idea at preſent, and unleſs the vengeance of a juſtly offended God ſhould hereafter pour the vials of his wrath upon our guilty heads, we ſhall never know them. God grant

grant that Chriſt may have endured them for every one of us. The outward part of his paſſion was but a faint picture of what he endured, when the chaſtiſement of our peace was laid upon him, and yet of the outward part he might truly ſay, " Is it nothing to you, all " ye that paſs by, Behold and ſee if ever there " was any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow," &c. The ſhame that ought to cover all our faces he endured; for us the guilty, and ſhameleſs in guilt, if by continuing in ſin we put him again to an open ſhame, he was deſpiſed and rejected of men; he was mocked, and derided, and ſpit upon, buffeted and ſcourged, crowned with thorns and blindfolded, falſly accuſed, and falſly condemned. Then behold him bearing his croſs. When we ſee him fainting and ſinking under the load, and his face and raiment covered with blood, does it not bring to mind what he ſays of himſelf in the book of Pſalms? " The " ploughers ploughed upon my back and made " long furrows"--they ploughed up his back with the long and deep wounds of their ſtripes and ſcourges; but by theſe ſtripes we were healed. Nay he ſays more in another Pſalm, that he was ſo wounded from head to foot, there was no whole part in his body: and you cannot doubt of it, if you raiſe your eyes to the croſs, and ſee the ſuffering bleeding lamb of God in the laſt ſcene of his paſſion. And yet

this was the leaſt part of his ſufferings. "Give "me any grief" ſays the wiſe man, "but the "grief of the mind, for a wounded ſpirit who "can bear?" Who indeed can bear a ſpirit wounded of God? when Jeſus was in the garden, his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful, was in an agony, even unto death; but theſe were only the beginning of ſorrows. When he took upon him the iniquities of us all, and almighty juſtice finding them upon him demanded full ſatisfaction, and received it to the uttermoſt farthing, then he had a wounded ſpirit, ſuch as all the men upon earth, no not all the holy angels in heaven could have ſuſtained for a moment. He bore it for ſix hours hanging upon the curſed tree, until all was finiſhed; then he bowed his head and gave up the ghoſt. And thus he was made ſin for us, and ſuffered for our ſins, who knew no ſin himſelf, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him: and he became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs, and taſted death for every man. He died to ſave our ſouls and bodies from the power of death. And he roſe again, that we might receive juſtification to life, that our ſouls might ariſe here from the grave of ſin, and that our bodies might in God's good time ariſe from the grave of death, and both of them united in a glorified ſtate might receive eternal life as the free gift of God through Je-

ſus Chriſt our Lord. And being thus made perfect through obeying and ſuffering, through death and reſurrection he became the author of eternal ſalvation. He wrought out ſuch perfect righteouſneſs to be imputed unto ſinners, that he is now able to ſave them to the uttermoſt. He has the infinite merit of his obedience to atone for their diſobedience. He has the infinite merit of his ſufferings to free them from ſuffering. He died, to ſave them from the firſt and the ſecond death. He roſe again, that they might riſe to a newneſs of life here in grace, and to life everlaſting in glory. And he is now the one mediator between God and man, able and willing to plead the fulneſs of his merits for the acceptance of every ſinner, who comes unto God the father through him. From

Hence it follows, That Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of our acceptance. If God the father ever receive us as juſt and righteous, it muſt be in the perfect righteouſneſs of his ſon. We muſt be accepted in the beloved; in whom the father was well pleaſed, and through whom he will be well pleaſed, with us. The paſſages before cited clearly prove, that this is the doctrine of all ſcripture. The Pſalmiſt has given us the ſentiments of the Old Teſtament worthies—"I will go in the ſtrength of the Lord God—I "will make mention of thy righteouſneſs, even

" of thine only." And God forbid, that we, under the New Teſtament, ſhould make mention of any other. Shall we go about to eſtabliſh our own righteouſneſs in oppoſition to the righteouſneſs of God? Or ſhall we, under the guilt of original and actual ſin, think of working out any righteouſneſs for which we ſhall be accepted in part or altogether? If we could, then Chriſt obeyed and ſuffered in vain. If we could attain ſaving knowledge by the light of nature, and could act agreeably to it by the law of nature, then of what uſe would be the light and law of the goſpel? But nature has no light, it is dark and blind in the things of God, and what can its law be, that is diſcovered by a dark and blind nature, but darkneſs and blindneſs? Nay, it is ſomething worſe. If fallen nature has any law, it is the law of the members, which warreth againſt the law of God, and bringeth a man into captivity to the law of ſin. This is the only law of nature to be met with in the word of God: for nature is fallen and corrupt; it is depraved in the will and affections, as well as ignorant in the underſtanding. It is always inclined and prone to evil; " for the fleſh" (which ſtands in ſcripture for the fallen depraved affections of the natural man) " luſteth always againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit " againſt the fleſh, and theſe two are contrary " the one to the other"—the will of the natural man

man is always contrary to the will of God; from hence it follows, that what is called the religion of nature, is contrary to the religion of God: becauſe nature uſed with religion confines it to man's nature, no other nature being concerned in the queſtion; and man's nature is fallen and corrupt, ſinful in the fountain, and ſinful in the ſtreams, and what then can the religion be, which this nature is able to diſcover and to practice? Certainly it muſt be a blind and corrupt religion. Jeſus Chriſt makes no part of it. He is not the foundation upon which it ſtands. The fineſt ſyſtem of the religion of nature that ever was delineated builds nothing upon him, and ſince there is no other foundation but him, conſequently it ſtands upon nothing. And if the heart was not corrupt as well as blind, it would be unaccountable what ſhould tempt men with the pure word of God in their hands, which is able to make them wiſe unto ſalvation, to neglect it, and to write and read and ſtudy thoſe antichriſtian ſyſtems, which can teach no wiſdom, but what is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.

Men and brethren, be not offended; it behoves me to uſe great plainneſs of ſpeech. If I was to ſpeak ſmooth things, and to give flattering titles to the religion of nature, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt: for this religion was ſet up, and has been uſed to hurt his intereſt, and when we ſee it has ſucceeded, ſurely it is high

high time for thoſe ſervants, who love their maſter's praiſe more than the praiſe of men, to ſet themſelves ſtrenuouſly againſt it. Happy will it be for this place, if the noble company of his ſervants ſhould increaſe, until the religion of nature has not one admirer left. Jeſus Chriſt will be exalted among you in proportion as the religion of nature falls in eſteem: and he has promiſed, "them that honour me, I will honour." Honour Jeſus Chriſt, and exalt him above all, and then his higheſt honours ſhall deſcend upon this univerſity, and he will make her very enemies to be at peace with her. Oh for that happy day, when the honour that is of God ſhall be ſought after as the crown and reward of all your ſtudies. And why need we doubt it? We have an earneſt before our eyes. Do we not ſee the religion of nature loſing its intereſt every day? Do not men begin to be afraid of truſting the vaſt concerns of eternity upon it? And have they not good reaſon? For has it not appeared, from what has been ſaid, that its firſt principles are antichriſtian? They ſuppoſe man's natural faculties to be able to inveſtigate the things of God—Scripture abſolutely denies it. They ſuppoſe he has will and power to act agreeably to the will of God—Scripture abſolutely denies that he has either will or power. They ſuppoſe that by practiſing the duties of natural religion you may altogether or in part render

yourſelves

yourſelves acceptable to God—Scripture abſolutely denies this, declaring that there is no other foundation of acceptance, but Jeſus Chriſt. And beſides, the religion of nature manifeſtly tends to rob the God of our ſalvation of his glory, and to leſſen the merits of his righteouſneſs, as much as ſcripture tends to exalt both. And both are exalted, wherever the ſcripture is received pure and unmixed with human ſyſtems; and we have melancholy experience of the contempt offered to both, wherever the religion of nature is embraced. The doctrine of the ever-bleſſed trinity, on which all ſcripture ſtands, makes no part of this religion. So that the religion of the bible and the religion of nature have different objects of worſhip. The chriſtian worſhips one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; but this is rank idolatry with the natural man, who adores one ſupreme being, a metaphyſical divinity, exiſting in one perſon, with certain imaginary attributes, ſuch as infinitely extended, filling all ſpace, &c.---Hence he explodes the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt---Hence he deſpiſes the authority of his laws.---Hence that diſſoluteneſs of morals throughout the kingdom, which all men ſee, and even the profeſſors of natural religion confeſs. Would to God they were convinced, what a great ſhare they have in it, and how much of it they have to anſwer for. It would be for their preſent and eternal peace, if inſtead

of

of maintaining and teaching this unſcriptural religion, which is the ſink of hereſy and corruption, they would join their hearts and hands in exalting the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and his infallible word, wherein that religion is contained, and in labouring to bring the lives as well as the opinions of men into obedience to it. How highly it is incumbent upon you, my brethren, to promote this much-deſired reformation, I need not farther urge at preſent, than by reminding you of a very awful truth, to which we have all ſet our hands, and may God ſet our hearts to act agreeably to it. What I mean is the 18th article of our church, wherein we have declared, "They alſo are to be had accurſed, that pre-"ſume to ſay, that every man ſhall be ſaved "by the law or ſect which he profeſſeth, ſo that "he be diligent to frame his life according to "that law, and the light of nature. For holy "ſcripture doth ſet out unto us only the name "of Jeſus Chriſt, whereby men muſt be ſaved." In this article we have given in our public teſtimony before God and his church againſt the light and the law of nature, and with our own mouths have put both of them under the curſe. And ſhall we with the ſame mouths afterwards preach up the light and law of nature, and pronounce them bleſſed? God forbid. I hope his good ſpirit will keep us free from this monſtrous guilt, and enable us in all our preaching

ing to ſet forth only the name of Jeſus Chriſt whereby men muſt be ſaved.

But it may be here enquired, if man in a ſtate of nature be at enmity with God, and can be accepted only through Jeſus Chriſt, by what means ſhall he ſeek this reconciliation? The ſcripture has given us this plain and eaſy method. God the father accepts us through the all-perfect righteouſneſs of Chriſt; this righteouſneſs is imputed unto us by faith; and the true living faith is a divine grace wrought in the ſoul by the giver of every good and perfect gift. It is not the reſult of comparing evidence, and of giving the aſſent to the ſtrongeſt arguments: for a man may do this without the leaſt grain of ſaving faith; but it is, according to St. Paul, the gift of God—And in another place he calls it one of the fruits of the ſpirit—And St. Peter ſays, it is God that purifieth the heart by faith. He enables the ſinner, who finds his want of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, to ſeek it, and to lay hold of it: for whoever hungers and thirſts after Chriſt's righteouſneſs, has a promiſe, that he ſhall be filled, even filled with peace and joy in believing that this righteouſneſs is imputed unto him, and with the love of God, which is ſhed abroad in his heart by the holy ſpirit. And if there be any truth in God or man, this promiſe is now fulfilled, and every one that enters in to our Lord's kingdom finds righteouſneſs and peace and joy in the holy Ghoſt.

Some

Some perſons think they can eaſily evade the force of this reaſoning, by ſuggeſting it to be poſſible, that all this may be a deluſion. If a man is not acquainted with the ſcripture marks of true faith, and is not careful to compare them with his own experience, poſſibly he may be deluded, and fancy, that God has accepted him, when he has not. But if he ſets out deeply convinced of his want of faith, waits for it in the inſtituted way, in that way receives it, and the effects of true ſaith follow upon receiving it, then if ſuch a perſon may be deluded, there is no certainty in the world. The ſcriptures were written to direct us in theſe points, and they are ſo plain, that the way-faring man, though fooliſh, cannot err therein. They have given us one infallible rule to guide our enquiries, which is to examine the nature of faith by its purifying virtue. Wherever the true faith is, it purifies the heart, cleanſing it from the pollution and from the guilt of ſin, and deſtroying alſo the dominion of ſin, ſo that the believer daily grows in grace, and goes on in his chriſtian courſe, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.

If faith does not work thus in an holy life, it is indeed a deluſion. What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? If he have not a working faith, an active operative grace, purifying the heart from ſin, and producing in the clean heart all

all the fruits of the ſpirit, he wants the ſcripture marks of true faith; and let him talk ever ſo much, and be ever ſo ſtrongly perſuaded of his acceptance with God, he is in a dangerous deluſion. It is but a dead thing, which he ſuppoſes to be the living faith: for it is written, "As the body "without breath is dead, ſo faith without works "is dead alſo." Works are the breath of faith. If it be alive it will breathe, as certainly as the living body breaths. If it have no breath, no works to evidence its life, the ſcripture looks upon it to be a dead carcaſs; but if it breaths, and acts, and abounds in every good word and work to the glory of God, and to the ſervice of men, then we may with as much certainty pronounce it to be the true faith, as we can pronounce the body to be alive, when it is able to perform all the offices of its animal life: for as the body while it breaths is alive, ſo faith while it works is alive alſo. In this caſe there can be no deluſion: becauſe we follow the ſure rule laid down for our direction, By their fruits ye ſhall know them. How can we miſtake the fruits of the ſpirit for the fruits of the fleſh? Is not every tree known by its own fruit? Do men ever think of gathering figs of thorns, or grapes of a bramble-buſh? The fruits of grace, and of fallen nature, are as oppoſite as the two ſpirits which produce them. The one abounds in the works of the fleſh, the other crucifies the fleſh

fleſh with its affections and luſts. The one fills the mind with ſpiritual pride, envy, and malice, the other begins with humility, and works by love. The one lives in open tranſgreſſion of the laws of God, the other conforms his words and works, and even the thoughts of his heart, to the ſtandard of ſcripture. Can you ſee theſe different fruits, and be at a loſs to determine, who is the author of each? Surely we want no evidence to diſprove the pretences of an adulterer, a fornicator, an unclean perſon, and the reſt mentioned by the apoſtle. Their lives ſpeak their want of faith. By their fruits we ſee that they have not the root of matter within them, becauſe they hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs. They muſt either have deluded themſelves, or elſe they are downright hypocrites: for it is of the very eſſence of true faith to deſtroy ſin, and to work in an holy obedience. When we are accepted in the beloved, and faith in his blood has purified our hearts, then we are, through his grace, both prepared and alſo able to ſhew this work of faith in our lives and converſations; and this point comes to be conſidered under the third head, which was to prove, That Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all holy odedience. But this I muſt leave for the ſubject of another diſcourſe, and would only obſerve at preſent from what has been ſaid, that ſince Chriſt is the foundation of all ſaving knowledge, it is our duty

duty to ſeek it from him in all the means of grace, and eſpecially in the word: for the commandment is pure, enlightening the eyes. Whoever hears and reads it with humility and prayer, will find the eyes of his underſtanding enlightened. He will ſee clearly the things of God, and will ſee more clearly, than others can, the uſeful arts and ſciences. If he ſtudy them under the direction of divine grace, and with a view to the divine glory, the eternal light will ſhine into his heart, and give him more underſtanding than his teachers. And ſince Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of our acceptance with God the father, let us ſeek to be accepted through faith, and never think of ſetting up any righteouſneſs of our own in oppoſition to his. He is the Lord our righteouſneſs, through whoſe merits imputed unto us by faith, God will receive us as juſt and righteous. And may the holy Spirit give you the practical conviction of theſe two important truths, that you may find the knowledge of the glory of God in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and may through his all-perfect righteouſneſs be preſented before God the father without ſpot of ſin unto ſalvation; to whom with the Son and the holy Spirit three perſons in the unity of the Godhead, be equal glory, worſhip, and praiſe, in the church militant and triumphant, now and for ever. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

FROM the ſcope and deſign of theſe words, which were opened in a former diſcourſe, it was propoſed to conſider the following particulars:

Firſt, That Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all ſaving knowledge.

Secondly, He is the foundation of all acceptance with God the father.

Thirdly, He is the foundation of all holy obedience. And,

Laſtly, He is the foundation of our preſent and eternal happineſs.

Under the firſt head it was proved, that man's natural ignorance and blindneſs in the things of God made it neceſſary he ſhould be enlightened. Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to open the blind eyes, and to be a light to them that ſat in darkneſs. He ſays of himſelf, "I am the "light of the world, and whoſoever believeth "in me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall "have the light of life." He is as truly the light of the ſpiritual, as the ſun is the light of the material world, and whoever ſeeks to be enlightened

lightened with any ſaving truth, muſt receive it from the gracious influence of his divine rays. And under the

Second head man's natural corruption, and actual ſinfulneſs, were conſidered. The holineſs, juſtice, and truth of God could not accept the ſinner, while he lay in this ſtate of pollution and guilt, and he could do nothing to deliver himſelf from it, but muſt have lived here and for ever ſeparated from God, unleſs Jeſus Chriſt had obeyed and ſuffered, died and riſen again, to work out that perfect righteouſneſs, through the merits of which imputed unto the ſinner by faith, God the father will now accept him, and receive him as juſt and righteous into his love and into his heaven. From whence it follows by direct conſequence, that until he be thus accepted he can do no good works, which comes to be conſidered under the

Third head, viz. that Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all holy obedience. Man in his natural ſtate cannot perform any holy obedience. He wants both will and power, until his perſon be accepted through Jeſus Chriſt, and united to him by true and lively faith. The doctrine of our church upon this point is very clear and full. In the 13th article, entitled, "Of works before "juſtification," ſhe teaches that—"Works done "before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration "of

" of his ſpirit, are not pleaſant to God; for-
" aſmuch as they ſpring not of faith in Jeſus
" Chriſt, neither do they make men meet to
" receive grace, or (as the ſchool authors ſay)
" deſerve grace of congruity: yea rather for that
" they are not done as God hath willed and
" commanded them to be done, we doubt not
" but they have the nature of ſin." Our works are not acceptable, until we have the grace of Chriſt and the inſpiration of his ſpirit to render our perſons accepted. Nay the very beſt works we can do, if they be not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, have certainly in them the nature of ſin. " We
" doubt not but they have the nature of ſin," is a very ſtrong expreſſion: but our pious reformers could not ſoften it. They had left the biſhop of Rome upon account of the doctrine of merit, which the Papiſts hold, and it is the moſt dangerous of all their tenets: for hereby they go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting themſelves to the righteouſneſs of God. All the reformers joined in aſſerting juſtification by faith only, knowing that Chriſt was the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth. It is impoſſible to be more clear and expreſs againſt the merit of works, than the compilers of our articles and homilies are; they ſeem to have been guided in their

their opinion by two principal reaſons, both taken from ſcripture, the firſt reſpecting God, the ſecond ourſelves.

It is impoſſible to do any good works well-pleaſing to God, until we are accepted in Chriſt, becauſe our whole nature is ſinful--in it dwelleth no good thing, and without the grace of Chriſt and the inſpiration of his ſpirit no good thing can ever dwell. The ſcripture declares us to be by nature children of wrath. We became objects of God's wrath, when by the original offence mankind tranſgreſſed his holy, juſt, and good law. Then his holineſs, juſtice, and goodneſs became concerned to inflict the threatened puniſhment, which they did inflict, and to which every ſon of fallen Adam is ſubject, until he be accepted through Jeſus Chriſt. In this fallen ſtate he is like an attainted rebel, who cannot do any action that is deemed good and valid in law, until his attainder be reverſed, and he be reſtored in blood. This is our very caſe in ſpirituals. What can we do, that will be deemed good and valid in the court of heaven, while we are under a ſtate of forfeiture, our perſons are guilty, and our whole nature (as our church expreſſes it) deſerves God's wrath and damnation?

And we are ſtill more incapable of doing any acceptable works, if we conſider the ſtate we are in by actual tranſgreſſion. We are under

ſentence of condemnation for the firſt offence: for the law is of ſo pure and ſpiritual a nature as to reach to the inmoſt thoughts of the heart. It requires truth in the inward parts, and expects perfect obedience there, as well as in the words, and actions. The ſtile of it is, "Do "this, and thou ſhalt live." It promiſes life, but to them only, who never err from its commandments. One ſingle failing cuts us off from the promiſed life, and puts us under the curſe: for it is written, "Curſed is every man who "continueth not in all things, that are written "in the book of the law to do them." Now the ſame law, which has brought him in guilty before God cannot acquit him afterwards; becauſe he is already a convict, is ſentenced, and under the curſe, and he can think of no method of eſcaping the deſerved puniſhment, but to pay an unerring obedience for the future. Suppoſing he could do this, yet it would be making no ſatisfaction; becauſe after one tranſgreſſion by the deeds of the law can no fleſh be juſtified. It is an adjudged caſe, that partial obedience can make no atonement to the law, which required perfect obedience: the equity of this proceeding we acknowledge in our own laws. If a criminal, found guilty of murder, was to alledge in his defence, that he had broken no other law of the land, that he was not a thief nor an adulterer, &c. would this plea be allowed

ed in court? Would he be acquitted of the murder, becauſe it was not attended with robbery? No. The judge would obſerve to him, that he came there to be tried for a murder, and that he was found guilty by the law, and as ſuch muſt be condemned: for he that ſaid, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, ſaid alſo, Thou ſhalt do no murder. Now if thou commit no robbery, yet if thou kill, thou art a tranſgreſſor of the law: for whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all, and is under guilt and condemnation, as if he had offended againſt the whole law. The law of God is pure and ſpiritual, and allows of no deviation from it. If it gives life, it muſt have perfect unerring obedience; where this is wanting in one inſtance, it cannot take partial obedience as any atonement for diſobedience: from whence it follows, that men under the guilt of original and actual ſin cannot, with reſpect to God, perform any holy obedience. And

With reſpect to ourſelves, there is another reaſon, which being taken from a matter of fact, ſhould carry with it full conviction. Our fallen nature is ſo entirely depraved, that it has neither will nor power to perform any holy obedience. The old man of ſin, which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts, can do nothing but ſin. And until he be put off and crucified with all his affections and luſts, we cannot put

on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs: for we are not only corrupt, but alſo under the bondage of corruption; not only ſinners, but alſo ſlaves to ſin, ſold under ſin, and led captive to commit it by the devil at his will. Sin has ſuch an abſolute dominion, that although it exerciſes the moſt cruel tyranny, yet men have no deſire to ſhake off its yoke. Sin wears away their bodies in its ſervice, and yet they are pleaſed with their own deſtruction, and ſin on. Whenever the tyrant commands---Do this, the natural man doeth it, though it be at the peril of his life. When ſin puts him upon a courſe of uncleanneſs, which he knows will bring the infirmities of old age upon him before he has come to manhood, or a courſe of intemperance, which muſt end in painful and acute diſtempers, the poor ſlave ſubmits. And muſt not ſin reign in his mortal body, ſince he thus obeys it in the luſts thereof? Muſt it not have abſolute dominion over him, ſince he thus yields his members inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, and yields them, even to work out his own deſtruction? And when he ſees this deſtruction before his eyes, yet he has no deſire to avoid it; we have neither will nor power to deliver ourſelves from ſin's dominion: becauſe when we were yet without ſtrength, Chriſt died for the ungodly. The ſoul was enſlaved, and without ſtrength to recover

ver its liberty as well as the body. Which of its faculties are free and able to caſt off the tyranny of ſin? Can this good deſire ariſe firſt in the imagination? It cannot. The imaginations of the heart of the natural man are evil, and only evil, and that continually. Can it ariſe in the underſtanding? It cannot: for it is in darkneſs. When the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand, and ſeek after God, he found none, no not one---they were wiſe enough to do evil, but to do good they had no knowledge; neither had they a will to chuſe it: for the natural man follows the will of the fleſh, which is always contrary to the will of God, and with the heart and affections he ſerves the law of ſin.

Thus the dominion of ſin is univerſal. It commands all the faculties of ſoul and body, which ſerve it with a willing and uninterrupted obedience; and from what has been ſaid with reſpect to God, and with reſpect to ourſelves, it is evident that the natural man is utterly unable to perform any holy obedience. This is the plain doctrine of ſcripture, and it is confirmed by our church in her 10th article, which declares, that " the condition of man after the " fall of Adam is ſuch, that he cannot turn and " prepare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength " and good works to faith and calling upon " God;

" God: wherefore we have no power to do " good works, pleaſant and acceptable to God, " without the grace of God by Chriſt pre- " venting us, that we may have a good will, " and working with us, when we have that " good will." Both the good will, and the power to work with it come from Chriſt; and the manner in which he beſtows both upon us is thus deſcribed in ſcripture. God the father accepts us as righteous through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, whereby we are juſtified; upon which we are united to Chriſt through faith given us by his holy ſpirit; and from this union we receive continual ſupplies of grace to enable us to bring forth the fruits of the ſpirit, which are well-pleaſing unto God the father.

This vital union with Chriſt the head of the body is the principal of divine life in all his members, and it is expreſſed in ſcripture by various phraſes, which denote the reality and abſolute certainty of it, and which cannot admit of a metaphorical ſenſe, ſuch as, " Chriſt's " dwelling in us, and we in him, our being " rooted and planted into him, and built up in " him, our being of one ſpirit and one fleſh " with him, our living and being led by his " ſpirit." And it is alſo repreſented by various images, ſuch as the union between the head and the body, what a ſtrange body would it be, which

which had only a metaphorical union with the head? between the bread and the eater, what ſort of a conſtitution muſt it be, which could live upon metaphorical bread? and between the foundation and the building, what kind of a building would it be, which ſhould ſtand upon a metaphorical foundation? But chiefly between the vine and the branches, which our Lord has largely treated of in John xv. "I am "the vine," ſays he, "ye are the branches. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf ex- "cept it abide in the vine, no more can ye ex- "cept ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, "and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much "fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." If any man abide in Chriſt, and bear much fruit to the glory of the father, he muſt be as truly and as vitally united to Chriſt, as the branches are to the vine: for he is the root and ſtock, from whence the branches receive their nouriſhment, and are enabled to bring forth fruit: and therefore whoever is not united to Chriſt can have no principle of divine life in him, but is like a branch cut off from the ſtock and withered, whoſe end is to be burnt.

From theſe ſcriptures it is evident, that we cannot live to God nor bring forth any fruit unto holineſs until we are united to Chriſt, and have fellowſhip with him. The ſpirit of God is the bond of this union: for he gives us the true

faith, whereby the ſoul is enabled to reject every thing that would ſeparate it from Chriſt, and to caſt away all hopes of ſalvation in its own endeavours and works, and thus placing no merit in any thing it can do, it cloſes in with the free offer of mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, whom faith has a peculiar fitneſs to receive, and does actually receive him with all his fulneſs, as theſe ſcriptures teſtify, "For we have an acceſs," ſays the apoſtle, "and entrance by faith into "that grace of Chriſt, wherein we ſtand." And again, "Chriſt dwelleth in our hearts by faith." And that moſt holy faith, whereby Chriſt dwelleth in us, enables us to live the life of Chriſt; for by purifying all the faculties of the ſoul it makes us to be like him, to love his image, and to deſire it may be perfectly formed in our ſouls. And accordingly by the cloſe and intimate union which faith keeps up between Chriſt and us, we are made conformable to his death and reſurrection: for faith draws virtue from his death to deſtroy the dominion of ſin, and from his reſurrection to riſe to newneſs of life. Nothing but the influence of the death of Chriſt, and a real fellowſhip with it, can free us from ſin's dominion. We muſt be planted together in the likeneſs of his death, if we ever get any mortifying power over the body of ſin. And we muſt be alſo planted into the likeneſs of his reſurrection, that we who are by nature dead in

treſpaſſes

treſpaſſes and ſins may be quickened in Chriſt, and made alive in him. St. Paul had happy experience of this doctrine—" I am crucified, ſays " he, with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, " but Chriſt liveth in me, and the life which I " now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the " ſon of God." And whoever is crucified with Chriſt in the ſame manner, has the body of ſin deſtroyed, that henceforth he ſhould not ſerve ſin, and whoever liveth by the ſame faith in the ſon of God, has continual ſupplies of grace from Jeſus Chriſt to enable him to live a life of holineſs unto God.

This is the ſcripture doctrine of holy obedience. We are therein taught, that God muſt work in us whatever is well-pleaſing to him. St. Paul prays thus for his Hebrews: " Now the " God of peace make you perfect in every good " work to do his will, working in you that " which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through " Jeſus Chriſt:" who came in the fleſh to deſtroy in us ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, that we might be fit to perform holy obedience. " The " great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, ſays " he, gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem " us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a " peculiar people, zealous of good works." And again another ſcripture ſaith—" We are created " in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works." When we are made new creatures in him, then have we a new

new nature with new affections, which delight to obey the will of God, as much as the old ſinful nature hated it: for if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature, old things are paſſed away, behold all things are become new. He is renewed throughout, in body, ſoul, and ſpirit. The body, which ſin enſlaved and defiled, is cleanſed by the blood of Chriſt, and conſecrated by his Spirit for an holy temple to the living God. The ſoul is enriched with the divine graces of faith, and hope, and love, which work upon all the faculties, reſtraining the imagination, enlightening the underſtanding, regulating the will, and turning the heart and affections to God; and then renewing the ſpirit day by day with the ſweet and holy tempers of the bleſſed Jeſus, that the whole man may grow up to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt. Nothing availeth in Chriſt Jeſus but this new creature. God the Father will accept of no obedience, unleſs it be the work of this new nature. Our beſt duties and ſervices are diſpleaſing to him, unleſs we be renewed by faith in the ſpirit of the mind, as our church has clearly determined in the 12th article. "Albeit "that good works, which are the fruits of faith, "and follow after (don't go before) juſtification, "cannot put away our ſins, and endure the ſe- "verity of God's judgment, yet are they pleaſ- "ing and acceptable to God in Chriſt, and do

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" ſpring out neceſſarily of a true and lively faith,
" inſomuch that by them a lively faith may be
" as evidently known, as a tree diſcerned by the
" fruit."

From theſe authorities it is evident, that Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all holy obedience. Until you be accepted in him, you can do no good works; nay, without him you can do nothing. The ſcripture and our articles and homilies ſpeak full to this point, and they entirely overthrow the deſtructive doctrine of the Papiſts and Socinians, who agree in maintaining the merit of works. Every true ſon of our church has renounced their hereſies. The ſcripture has aſſured him, that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord; but he finds the ſinfulneſs of his nature reigning in many unholy tempers, and breaking out into many offences, againſt which he ſtrives, but not in his own ſtrength: for he is convinced, that his ſoul is by nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and that all his ſtriving can no more give it ſpiritual life, than rubbing and chafing a dead carcaſs can reſtore to it animal life, and therefore he does not ſeek to attain holineſs, while his nature continues corrupt and dead in ſin. The goſpel method is directly contrary. It firſt cleanſes the heart, from whence are the iſſues of life, and then the ſtreams will certainly run pure: It directs you to labour firſt to be reconciled unto God, that you may be accepted

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through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and juſtified by his merits, and then you will have a new nature inclined to holineſs, and endued by the holy ſpirit with power to ſeek and to attain it. After you have received juſtification to life, you may go on with the work of ſanctification: for by juſtification your nature is regenerate and new-born, and ſanctification is the proper work of this regenerate nature, as it brings all its parts and faculties into uſe, whereby they improve and grow in ſtrength. Juſtification, which is the new birth of the ſoul, is like the firſt birth of the infant into this world. When it is born, it has all the parts of the body perfect; no new ones are added afterwards, only theſe grow in ſize and ſtrength, until they reach to the ſtature of a man, as the graces grow in the juſtified ſoul until it arrive to a perfect man in Chriſt. And then God, who has been glorified by it upon earth, will receive it into his eternal glory through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord—

Who is the foundation of our preſent and eternal happineſs, as I propoſed in the fourth and laſt place to conſider. This is a direct conſequence from what has been ſaid, and does not require many words to illuſtrate it: for ſince the ſinner has no ſaving knowledge, until Chriſt enlighten him; ſince God the Father will not accept his perſon, but through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, nor his works, but as done in Chriſt, and flowing

flowing from living faith in him, then it is certain that whatever happineſs he enjoys muſt be derived from the Lord and giver of grace and glory. He can merit none, for when he has done all theſe things that are commanded him, which yet no man has done, he was even then to ſay, I am an unprofitable ſervant, I have done that which was my duty to do, and therefore I cannot deſerve preſent, and much leſs eternal happineſs from the hand of God.

By preſent happineſs I mean thoſe comforts of the goſpel which I have been deſcribing, and which the heavenly comforter adminiſters to the ſinner, when he is enlightened with ſaving truth, when he is convinced of his reconciliation with God the Father, and ſatisfied that the divine holineſs, juſtice, and truth, are no longer his enemies, but will now make all things work together for his good; and when he is aſſured of the truth of his reconciliation, as well from the inward witneſs of the ſpirit of God with his ſpirit, as from the holy obedience in which he now delights, and which he has power to perform. This happy ſoul enjoys the comforts of preſent ſalvation, which are daily ſtrengthened in it more and more, as it grows in grace, and bears fairer and richer fruits of holineſs: for this growth in grace is an evident proof of our acceptance with God, and a fruitful ſource of ſpiritual comfort: when we find ourſelves renewed

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in the ſpirit of our minds, and are pleaſed with the will of God in the inner man, and are enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments, the happineſs ariſing from hence can no more be deſcribed than the joys of heaven. If you would know what bleſſings, love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the ſpirit bring to the ſoul, O taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is. And whenever he gives you the experience of them, you will then find that in them heaven is already begun in the ſoul; and if by believing we can rejoice at preſent with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory, what muſt our joy be when we receive the end of our faith, even the eternal ſalvation of our ſouls. When Jeſus Chriſt admits us into his kingdom, and beſtows upon us all his ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places, what happineſs we ſhall then feel, tongue cannot utter, nor can heart conceive. And inconceivably great though it be, yet it is all the free gift of God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, "for he hath given us "eternal life, and this life is in his ſon:"—And faith is the hand by which we receive it: "for "he that believeth on me, ſaith the bleſſed "Jeſus, hath everlaſting life." He purchaſed it for us. We could not attain it by any of our own works, nor could the higheſt angel in heaven merit it for one of the ſons of men. It was bought for us by an ineſtimable price, by the obedience and ſufferings of the God-man Chriſt Jeſus,

Jeſus, and he therefore obeyed and ſuffered, died and roſe again, that we might be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Chriſt. He acted as our repreſentative, by which means we have an intereſt in all that he did and ſuffered. He reſiſted the temper, obeyed the law, ſuffered the puniſhment due to the tranſgreſſion of it, even unto death, roſe from the dead, aſcended into heaven, and ſat down on the throne of glory, as the head and repreſentative of all the elect people of God. In all theſe things he acted as the head of the body the church; and we commonly ſay, a perſon is crowned, when the crown is put upon his head. Now our head is already crowned, and therefore ſo long as he poſſeſſes his glory, we his members ſhall poſſeſs ours, and ſhall ſhare in the glories of our heavenly king. What theſe eternal glories are, it ſurpaſſeth all underſtanding to comprehend. The ſcripture has revealed them to us chiefly in negative deſcriptions. It removes from them that imperfection to which all ſublunary good is ſubject. It calls them riches, but then they are not ſubject to ruſt and moth, nor can thieves break in to rob us of them. It compares them to an inheritance, but then it is always in peace, no armies can lay it waſte, no irregular paſſion can interrupt the happy enjoyment of it: and there can be no fear of loſing it, becauſe all tears are wiped away from every eye; and upon every head there is placed

placed a crown of glory, which is "incorrup-" tible," has no principles of diſſolution, and therefore no defect in it; is "undefiled," has no ſtain of ſin, or infirmity under it, and "fa-" deth not away," all human glory like a flower of the field withers and dies, but this is always flouriſhing, and blooms in never-fading ſpring. Thus the ſcripture removes every thing from our heavenly happineſs, which renders our preſent enjoyments imperfect; and then to make the deſcription full, puts eternity to it. And yet, even of this eternal happineſs we have but faint ideas; we know it at preſent but in part. We ſhall know it better when our almighty Saviour beſtows it upon us. When he admits us into his preſence, receives us into his heaven, and places the never-fading crown of glory upon our heads, then we ſhall feel what an eternal weight of glory is. Then we ſhall enjoy that beatific viſion, without which heaven would not be deſirable, and we ſhall ſee the Lord Jeſus face to face, and ſhall know that he is above all bleſſing and praiſe. We know indeed at preſent that he is God over all bleſſed for ever, but the corruptible body preſſeth down the ſoul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind, ſo that our knowledge and our praiſes are imperfect. But then we ſhall be free from this earthly clog, and ſhall ſee more of his excellencies, and ſhall be more able to praiſe them. We ſhall continually find

find new beauties, new worlds of delight in him; for his perfections being infinite, will afford us freſh ſubject of praiſe to eternity. And our intereſt in them being an act of his free grace, will render them to us more precious, and the contemplation of them more ſweet. Every new day of glory (if I may ſo ſpeak, when time is no more) will bring us more in debt to his free grace. The holding of glory ſhall be free grace without end; ſo that Chriſt's relation of creditor, and ours of debtor, ſhall grow and be greater for ever. Redeemed ſinners can never ſay, Now our tribute of praiſe to Jeſus is fully paid, becauſe they will be always contracting new debts, and while they ſtand confirmed in bliſs, the more broken debtors will they be. The longer they enjoy the glory of heaven through millions of ages, the debt to the Lamb that purchaſed it for them by his blood will grow infinitely. Praiſes to eternity can take nothing from the debt; for the debt increaſes, while they are praiſing. And let the innumerable company of angels join the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect: let them raiſe their hearts and voices to the higheſt ſtrains of praiſe, they would ſtill fall ſhort of the greatneſs of his merits. O holy Spirit! now give us a heart and a tongue to join our imperfect praiſes with theirs. With them we aſcribe ſalvation to the Lord God omnipotent. Bleſſing, and honour,

and glory, and power be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

I ſhall here finiſh the doctrinal parts of this diſcourſe, but I cannot conclude without making a ſhort application. Every uſeful doctrine may be reduced to practice; and all the chriſtian doctrines have a direct tendency to operate in our lives, and to produce their proper effects in our converſations. We have been conſidering ſome of the excellencies of God our Saviour, which are not mere ſpeculative points; becauſe he was made unto us wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption. He is our all-wiſe prophet to enlighten the blindneſs of our underſtanding, and to teach us ſaving knowledge. He is our all-meritorious prieſt, through the merits of whoſe perfect ſacrifice the pollution and the guilt of our ſins are taken away, and we are accepted as righteous before God the Father. And he is our almighty king, by whoſe grace the dominion of ſin is deſtroyed in us, and we are enabled to perform an holy obedience. "Jeſus "Chriſt is all and in all: for we are complete "in him." Salvation from firſt to laſt, from the firſt ray of light which broke into our dark and ſinful ſouls, until we ſee Chriſt in the fulneſs of glory, is all his work, and to him muſt the honour of it be aſcribed. He is the foundation on whom it all ſtands: for "other foundation can

"no

" no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus " Chriſt."

Men, brethren, and fathers, ſuffer the word of exhortation. You profeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all ſaving knowledge: do you then ſeek it from him in the ſtudy of his holy word, and through the bleſſing of his good Spirit upon your ſtudies? or are any of you ſeeking it from the unſcriptural unnatural light of nature, from that nature which is totally dark and blind, until the abſtracted metaphyſician has ſtolen ſome great truths from the revealed word, and then boaſts that he was ſelf-enlightened, and that they were ſelf-irradiated upon his own mind by a more myſterious and enthuſiaſtic light than the maddeſt Quaker ever pretended to. In their metaphyſical reveries, let them talk of their light of nature; yet if God may be heard, nature is in darkneſs. It is blind in the things of God; nay more, until it be renewed, it cannot ſee and know them. To whom then would you go for the knowledge of them? To Chriſt, as held forth in his word, and applied by his Spirit, or rather to human learning and its arts and ſciences? God forbid. They have not one ray of their own to give. Their boaſted luſtre is but a borrowed light. Blot the ſun out of heaven and theſe bright ſtars are at once in the blackneſs of darkneſs: for there is but one created ſun to enlighten this material world, as there is but one

uncreated ſun to enlighten the ſpiritual world here in grace, and for ever in glory. When the arts and ſciences keep their proper ſtation, reflecting the light caſt upon them by the ſun of righteouſneſs, then the ſtudy of them is ſanctified, and they are highly uſeful in the ſchool of Chriſt; but unſanctified, they only tend to puff up and to feed the pride of corrupt nature. Let this be an anſwer to the adverſary, who may object, that I am a decrier of human learning. When it is preferred to divine, I do decry it, but in no other reſpect. Am I an enemy to light becauſe I prefer the all-reviving light of the ſun to the faint glimmering light of the ſtars? Chriſt is the ſun of righteouſneſs, the light of the ſpiritual world. Let it then be your firſt and principal ſtudy to attain from him divine learning, and in ſubordination to it ſeek human learning. Let God be your teacher in the things of God. Read his word, as he who was wiſer than his teachers did, day and night; but read it with humility, and always begin with the excellent prayer before mentioned, "Lord open "thou mine eyes, that I may ſee wondrous "things in thy law:" the Lord will open them, and you will not only ſee ſpiritual truths clearly, but will alſo be more diligent in the ſtudy of uſeful knowledge, and will attain more of it, than a man of the beſt parts, truſting to the mere ſtrength of genius, can ever attain. And one great

great truth the word and the Spirit of God will certainly manifeſt to you, and that is,

Secondly, The manner of your aceeptanee. To a ſinner eonvineed of the corruption of his nature, and of the tranſgreſſions of his life, nothing ean be more intereſting than to know, whether God's juſtiee and holineſs and truth can pardon him. The fancied light of fallen nature cannot teaeh him this. It never did. It never led one learned heathen, Greek, or Roman, to Jeſus Chriſt. It never ean: Becauſe it is blind, and with the aid of all the ſeiences, blind it remains, until Chriſt by his word and ſpirit open its eyes. Then it ſees, that his righteouſneſs imputed to it by faith is the only method of being aceepted as righteous before God the father. Are you then ſeeking to be aeeepted in the righteouſneſs of the beloved? Or are you trying to work out ſome righteouſneſs of your own, which altogether or in part may render you aeeepted? It muſt never be forgotten, that juſtification by faith only is the grand Proteſtant doctrine. Juſtification by works is downright Popery. We ſeparated from the biſhop of Rome, becauſe he ſet up the merit of works in oppoſition to the righteouſneſs of God. And lo! Proteſtant divines have fallen baek again into the ſink of Popery, maintaining the merit of works: as every man muſt do, who talks of the dignity and reetitude of human nature, of the dignity

dignity of ſinful nature, and of the rectitude of fallen nature, of natural religion, of the moral ſenſe, and of the moral ſcheme, and of the fitneſs and relation of things: for theſe ſyſtems are big with contradictions, unleſs man be able of himſelf to diſcover and to practice ſuch duties as will render him acceptable to God. And indeed, metaphyſical writers have aſcribed to blind fallen nature both this will and power, maintaining that "every one may find within himſelf the "rule of right, and obligations to follow it." Biſhop Butler's Sermons, p. 32. But what ſaith the ſcripture? Poſitively and expreſsly it ſpeaks of man's having neither will nor power, unleſs they be given him of God. Being ſinful in heart and life he lies under ſentence of condemnation by the juſt law of heaven, and like an attainted rebel he cannot do a legal act, until he be pardoned. Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of this pardon; and until we are accepted through his righteouſneſs, our beſt works have in them the nature of ſin. This is ſcripture, and the doctrine of our church. And can you believe a man to be a friend to either, who wants to eſtabliſh the merit of works? Can he be a ſound Proteſtant, or a good church of England-man? No, he cannot. Certainly, my brethren, you would condemn him with one voice. Away then with all the metaphyſical rubbiſh, which has long obſcured the ſcripture doctrine of acceptance:

for the love of the Lord Jeſus, and of his flock for whom he ſhed his blood, let us hear no more of the religion of nature—of that religion which finds us and leaves us children of wrath: for the ſake of your own preſent and eternal peace let all metaphyſical ſyſtems of the religion of nature be no more your favourite ſtudies. You have the holy ſcripture in your hands; whither would you go, but to it for the words of eternal life? And does it not teach you, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to redeem us from the miſeries of our fallen nature? And whoſe cauſe then are theſe men defending, who want to eſtabliſh a religion founded on that nature, from which Chriſt came to redeem us? Good God! what an attempt is this, for chriſtian men, chriſtian miniſters, embaſſadors of Jeſus Chriſt, not only to preach up the religion of nature, as if nature was not fallen, but alſo to make this religion of nature the foundation of revealed. What a monſtrous paradox is this, natural religion the foundation of revealed? Is not this taking away Jeſus Chriſt the ſure foundation, which God hath laid, and putting the religion of nature under him as a foundation to bear him up, and thus trying to lay another foundation, which if God be true no man can lay. The folly, the guilt, and the danger of this proceeding are ſo evident upon the principles before laid down, that I ſhall not urge the matter farther at preſent

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only if there be here any admirers of this metaphyſical and unnatural religion, it may be uſeful to them to conſider, what this religion can do for them, even as they underſtand it, which the religion of the bible has not promiſed to do for them in a more full and ample manner, eſpecially with reſpect to their performing an holy obedience, of which Jeſus Chriſt is the ſole foundation, which is the third inference from what has been ſaid.

Until you are accepted in Chriſt you cannot do any good works: becauſe your whole nature is corrupt, and nothing but corrupt fruit can grow upon it. Are you then ſeeking for an holy nature, that in it you may perform an holy obedience? Are you then praying to God to be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind, that Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith, that his will may become yours, his word your ſtudy and delight, his Spirit your guide? And is it the deſire of your ſoul, that you may be enabled to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments unto the end? Is Chriſt the foundation of this great work? And are you convinced you want grace from him every moment to carry it on? Then bring this conviction into practice. Let it operate in your lives. Where would you ſeek his grace, but in the means of grace? And when your perſons are accepted through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to you by faith,

faith, then God will accept your attendance upon theſe means, but not before. Then he will be found of you in them, will give his bleſſing to the uſe of them, and will enable you to abound in every good word and work to the praiſe of his glory. The ſcripture is expreſs, that we are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works. We can bear no fruit until we be grafted into him the true vine. Our church is exceeding clear upon this head. To their authorities we muſt ſubmit, and we ſhall find the happy effects of embracing them, if they diſpoſe us to ſeek, until God gives us a new nature with new faculties and affections, and enables us to bring forth much fruit to the praiſe of the glory of his free grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: for then we ſhall find the preſent comforts of the goſpel ſweetly drawing us on in the way of duty, until we be at laſt preſented perfect in Chriſt Jeſus. Perfect and complete in him, but not in our own righteouſneſs, we ſhall be preſented before God the father without ſpot of ſin to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us.

To theſe truths every chriſtian aſſents. He lays no other foundation for his preſent and eternal happineſs than Jeſus Chriſt, and he is a ſure foundation: for he is the author and finiſher of the faith, the author to begin it here in grace, the finiſher to end it, when faith ſhall be ſwallowed

ed up in viſion. As he is the author of all the works of creation, ſo is he the author of all the works of redemption, by whom they begin, through whom they are carried on, and in whom they will be completed: "For I am alpha and "omega, ſays he, the firſt and the laſt, which "was, which is, and which is to come, the al-"mighty." He is the Lord God omnipotent, by whom all things were made; by his over-ruling providence they are ſupported: for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power. He is the moſt bleſſed God and Saviour in the offices, of a prophet to enlighten our blind eyes, and to be our wiſdom, of a prieſt to atone for the pollution and the guilt of our ſins, and to be our righteouſneſs, and of a king to deſtroy in us the dominion of ſin, and to be our ſanctification. And he is God the ſovereign judge, before whoſe awful tribunal we muſt all ſoon appear. View Jeſus Chriſt in theſe exalted ſtations, where he ſits far above all principalities and powers, as the firſt and laſt in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and final judgment, and then ſee whether you can exalt him high enough. Is not this almighty God and King far above all bleſſing and praiſe? You cannot ſufficiently extol the works of creation. Survey them with a philo-ſopher's eye, and they will appear great and wonderful in wiſdom and power, affording an unexhauſted ſubject of praiſe. And how then

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ſhall we be able to magnify their maker, who is great above all his works? Eſpecially great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God almighty, in the redemption of a ſinful world: For when you glorify the Lord Jeſus for this ineſtimable mercy, exalt him as much as you can, for even yet will he far exceed, and when you exalt him, put forth all your ſtrength and be not weary: for you can never go far enough. How ſhould we upon earth go far enough, when the glorified ſpirits, who try to exalt him as much as they are able, yet fall ſhort? He will always, to eternity he will, be above all bleſſing and praiſe. The thouſands, thouſands, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand, who are now ſtanding round his throne, admiring his perfections, and ſinging the ſong of Moſes and the lamb, when they put forth all their ſtrength and are not weary, ſtill they can never go far enough. And when all the ſons of God who ſhouted for joy at the firſt creation, ſhall again join their voices upon the number of the elects being perfected, ſtill he will far exceed their moſt exalted ſong. Angels and men with their higheſt ſtrains of praiſe cannot come up to the greatneſs of our Lord's merit. Let the heavenly ſong be continued through millions of ages, yet the God whom they celebrate is infinite, and their praiſe therefore muſt fall ſhort of the ſubject. The perfection of the almighty creator, and the love of the all-merciful redeemer, are, to the

the redeemed of the Lord, ſubjects which eternity cannot exhauſt. O that it may be your happineſs and mine to lay Jeſus Chriſt and him only, for the foundation of all ſaving knowledge, of all acceptance with the father, and of all holy obedience, that having ſpent our time here by the ſtrength of his grace in his ſervice and to his glory, we may be admitted to ſee his perfections, and to be happy in the enjoyment of them, and may join our grateful hearts and voices with the bleſſed company of angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, in ſinging the eternal hymn of thanks and praiſe. So be it, Lord Jeſus, to the honour of the father, and to the glory of the eternal ſpirit, three perſons in one Jehovah, whom the church militant now worſhips, and the church triumphant praiſes for ever and ever. *Amen.*

In a Treatiſe, entitled, The Flower of Godly Prayers, *written by the Rev. Mr.* Thomas Becon, *and printed in the Year* 1563, *there is*

A PRAYER FOR FAITH,

Which breathes the very Spirit of the Apoſtles Doctrine, and which I lay before the Reader, that he may pray for the Comforts of it in the devout Words of this holy Man.

WE are taught by thy holy apoſtle, O moſt loving Saviour, that whatſoever is not of faith is ſin, and that it is impoſſible to pleaſe thee without faith. And therefore they that come unto thee muſt believe that thou art God, yea, and ſuch a God as is both able and will alſo abundantly reward all them that with true faith ſeek thee. For thy eyes, O Lord, look upon faith, and thou doſt appear and ſhew thyſelf unto them, that have faith in thee: yea, through faith, thou being the king of glory, art married to the ſouls of the faithful, and makeſt them partakers of thy divine nature, through the wonderful working of thy bleſſed Spirit. Through faith ſo many as believe are juſtified, made the ſons and heirs of God, and have everlaſting life. By faith we obtain

tain of God all good things, even whatſoever we aſk in thy name. Seeing that faith is ſo precious a jewel in thy ſight, that without it nothing is acceptable unto thy divine majeſty; and we of our own nature cannot have this moſt ſingular treaſure except thou giveſt it unto us from above, and doeſt breathe it into our hearts by thy holy Spirit: for we of ourſelves are blind, ignorant, fooliſh, and by no means can perceive the things that pertain to the ſpirit of God, we moſt heartily beſeech thee to take away from us all infidelity and unfaithfulneſs, which we received of old Adam, and to plant in us true faith and undoubted belief, that we may be thoroughly perſuaded that thou art the ſon of the living God, very God and very man, our alone ſweet-ſmelling ſacrifice, our alone mediator, advocate, and interceſſor, our alone wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption, by whom alone, and for whoſe ſake only, thy heavenly father is well pleaſed with us, our ſins are remitted, grace and everlaſting life are freely given unto us. O Lord God, ſuffer us not to lean to our own wiſdom, nor to believe, as blind fleſh fancieth, nor to ſeek ſalvation where ſuperſtition dreameth; but let our faith only be grounded on thy word, and give us grace truly to believe in thee with all our heart, to put our truſt in thee, to look for all good things of thee, to call upon thy bleſſed name in adverſity, and with joyful voices and more merry hearts,

hearts, to praiſe and magnify it in proſperity. Suffer us not to doubt neither of God thy heavenly father, nor of thee, God his ſon, nor of God the Holy Ghoſt, but earneſtly to believe that you being the diſtinct perſons in the Deity, are notwithſtanding, one very God, beſides whom, there is no God, neither in heaven nor in earth. Grant alſo, that we may aſſuredly believe whatſoever is contained in the holy ſcriptures, and by no means ſuffer ourſelves to be plucked from the verity thereof, but mainly and ſtedfaſtly abide in the ſame, even unto death, rage world, roar devil. And this faith, O ſweet Jeſu, increaſe thou daily in us more and more, that at the laſt, through thy goodneſs, we may be made perfect and ſtrong men in thy holy religion, and ſhew ourſelves both before thee and the world truly faithful, by bringing forth plenty of good works unto the glory and honour of thy name: which with God the father, and God the Holy Ghoſt, liveſt and reigneſt true God, worlds without end. *Amen.*

JEPHTHAH's VOW FULFILLED,

AND

His Daughter not *sacrificed*;

PROVED IN

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY, AT ST. MARY's,

IN OXFORD.

JEPHTHAH's VOW FULFILLED.

JUDGES XI. 30, 31.

And Jephthah *vowed a Vow unto the Lord, and ſaid, If thou ſhalt without fail deliver the Children of* Ammon *into mine hands,*

Then it ſhall be, that whatſoever cometh forth of the Doors of my Houſe to meet me, when I return in Peace from the Children of Ammon, *ſhall ſurely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering.*

THIS vow has been the ſubject of much ridicule; it has been repreſented, as raſhly made and immorally executed, and the ſcripture itſelf has ſuffered through the character of Jephthah: the vindication of it alſo has been attended with ſo many difficulties, that an attempt to remove them muſt be of ſervice to religion; and this I ſhall at preſent undertake. I ſhall endeavour to free it from the falſe interpretations which have been put upon it, and from the objections which have been made againſt it. But it is not the whole hiſtory I

ſhall treat in this manner: that would be too extenſive a deſign for a ſingle diſcourſe. The principal point alone ſhall be now conſidered, namely Jephthah's fulfilling his vow, which I purpoſe to ſhew he might, and did fulfil without ſacrificing his daughter.

The hiſtory has been generally underſtood in this ſenſe: when the men of Gilead had placed Jephthah at their head, in order to deliver them from the children of Ammon; he gathered together his army, and before he begun the battle he vowed a vow unto the Lord, and promiſed, that if God would proſper him, he would ſacrifice whatever ſhould firſt meet him on his return. Upon this he begins the attack, and the Lord delivered the Ammonites into his hands, ſo that he ſlew them with very great ſlaughter. By this ſucceſs he became obliged to a ſtrict obſervance of his vow; and it unfortunately ſo happened, that as he was returning to his houſe in peace, his only daughter, not knowing of his vow, came out with joy to meet him. Hereby ſhe became according to his vow, the perſon to be ſacrificed, and he did offer her up for a burnt-offering.

This is the common interpretation of Jephthah's vow. It has generally been ſuppoſed that his daughter was ſacrificed. An action ſo contrary to the laws of God and man, and ſo inconſiſtent with the good character, which St. Paul has given of Jephthah's faith, that it is not eaſy to conceive, how

how it came to paſs, that ſuch an opinion was ever entertained at all, much leſs how it became ſo general; eſpecially as no hiſtorical paſſage of ſcripture has laid more open to the wanton jeſts of the infidel, or is more difficult to be explained by the ſober believer. From theſe difficulties which the hiſtory now labours under, I truſt, I ſhall be able to free it by ſhewing,

I. That the opinion of her being ſacrificed is expoſed to ſo many ſolid objections, that it is not defenſible, and

II. By proving from the hiſtory itſelf, that ſhe was not ſacrificed.

1. And the firſt objection againſt the hiſtory's being explained in the common manner is this, that Jephthah could not have ſacrificed his daughter, though he had vowed to do it; becauſe human ſacrifices were abſolutely forbidden by the law of MOSES. And Jephthah knew this he did not only live in obedience to the law, but was alſo at that time the judge of it. And would he act contrary to his knowledge? Could he live in obedience to the law, and yet diſpenſe with the breach of one duty, which Moſes had made indiſpenſable? Or what an unjuſt judge would he be, who ſhould undertake to puniſh the offences of others, while he himſelf was a moſt notorious offender? Theſe circumſtances, indeed, prove, rather that he ought not to have done it, than that he did it not. But,

2. When

2. When we conſider further, that the ſame Spirit of the Lord was upon Jephthah at the making his vow, as was upon Moſes at the writing of the law; this clearly proves that he did it not: for the Spirit of the Lord could not give one law by Moſes, and another oppoſite to it by Jephthah—he could not, whilſt the firſt was ſtill in force, direct any perſon to tranſgreſs it—the infallible ſpirit of God cannot contradict himſelf—nor can human ſacrifices be both lawful and unlawful at the ſame time—ſo that if the ſame ſpirit, which ſpake in Moſes, directed Jephthah (as the text expreſsly ſays he did) in making his vow; then no doubt he did not ſacrifice his daughter. But

3. Further, ſuppoſing he had offered her up, and pretended to be directed by the ſpirit of God, yet how came it to paſs that he was never puniſhed? To offer human ſacrifices was made a capital crime by the law, and yet it is not ſo much as hinted, that he ſuffered death for what he did; nay, where does it appear that he was ever called to an account for it? And yet there was ſomething ſo particular in the offence, in the perſon of the offender, and in the time when he offended, that then the Jewiſh ſtate ought not to have over-looked it; and God, who then preſided over it, was in equity bound not to ſpare ſuch an offender. And if Jephthah under theſe circumſtances was not puniſhed, it is at leaſt probable, that

that he did not deſerve puniſhment, which yet he muſt have deſerved, if he had ſacrificed his daughter. And,

4. Theſe circumſtances are further confirmed from the nature of the action, which was certainly immoral, and ſuch therefore as Jephthah did not. There is nothing in which the general ſenſe of mankind is more agreed, than that every man's life is his own property: This general ſenſe ariſes from the natural principle of ſelf-preſervation, it comes confirmed to us by the laws of all free nations, and is further ſtrengthened by the laws of God: And that action which ſhould break through all theſe laws muſt be immoral. But though the action be immoral, yet perhaps it may be ſaid, was Jephthah ſuch a man as would not do an immoral action? St. Paul has here provided us with an anſwer, which fully clears up the character of Jephthah in this particular: for the moſt conſiderable circumſtance in the life of this eminent judge, was the hiſtory before us: this was the moſt material action recorded of him in ſcripture, and which placed his character in the moſt conſpicuous light. Now St. Paul could not form a judgment of his life and character without conſidering this his principal tranſaction; and in the 11th Chapter to the Hebrews, where he is celebrating the praiſes of thoſe antient worthies, who did ſuch great and excellent acts through faith, among others

others he mentions Jephthah, and the time, he ſays, would fail, if he ſhould ſet about praiſing him, and the other worthies, as they deſerved. Such a commendation from an apoſtle was the higheſt honour which could be conferred: for praiſe is ever judged of according to thoſe who give it, and that is the greateſt praiſe which is given by them, who are themſelves the moſt praiſe-worthy. What an high honour then was it to be commended by a St. Paul! certainly there could be nothing immoral in the character of Jephthah whom he thus commended, and yet the principal point of view in which St. Paul conſidered him, that indeed which gives us the ſtrongeſt proof of his faith, was the making his vow; which if he had fulfilled by ſacrificing his daughter, it muſt be confeſſed was an immoral action. And therefore if Jephthah could not ſacrifice his daughter without breaking through all thoſe moral laws of God and man, which ſay, "Thou ſhalt not "kill;" and if St. Paul when he conſidered him in this light, could not have recommended him had the action been immoral; then it is evident, that Jephthah did nothing immoral in fulfilling his vow, and conſequently did not ſacrifice his daughter. And

5. Beſides, when he made his vow, he promiſed to fulfil it upon condition, that God would proſper him in the undertaking he had in hand; and can it be ſuppoſed but that Jephthah would

word

word his vow with ſo much caution, as not to be obliged by it to do an immoral action? there are ſtill extant proofs enow of his great abilities as well as faith, which clearly evince, that he was far from being either raſh or weak, and yet he muſt have been both to a very great degree, if he could firſt have vowed to ſacrifice his daughter, or afterwards thought himſelf obliged to do it, becauſe God had given him ſucceſs: in either of theſe reſpects he muſt have acted out of character; in the firſt, without his uſual prudence, for which he is recommended; in the latter without his faith, for which he is celebrated. But ſtill,

6. Whatever Jephthah was, yet God is perfect; and how ſhall we vindicate the divine perfections, if he gave ſucceſs to thoſe means, which led directly to an immoral end? The Spirit of God was upon Jephthah, when he made his vow —the hand of God enabled him to ſucceed— and it was this ſucceſs which obliged him to perform his vow. In theſe inſtances he was certainly under the divine guidance. And was it of God that he vowed to ſacrifice his daughter, or could God in any ſenſe be the means of ſuch a ſacrifice? Theſe things cannot be. Far be ſuch proceedings from the All-perfect. His goodneſs, juſtice, veracity, nay every divine attribute forbid us to think of it. So that if the perfections of God will not ſuffer him to countenance

tenance an immoral action, and if he did countenance Jephthah's vow by aſſiſting him with his holy Spirit, and by giving him ſucceſs, then certainly the thing he vowed was not immoral, and of courſe he did not ſacrifice his daughter.

Out of many more objections that might be urged, let theſe ſuffice at preſent, as it fully appears from them, that the account commonly given is not rational, is inconſiſtent with the truth of ſcripture, and contrary to the hiſtory itſelf. Let us then ſeek out for ſome other explanation, which may be fairly deduced from the words themſelves; may be agreable to the reaſon of the thing, and conſiſtent with the good character St. Paul hath given us of Jephthah; and ſuch an interpretation I ſhall firſt lay down, and afterwards endeavour to eſtabliſh, in order to

II. Prove from the hiſtory itſelf, that he did not ſacrifice his daughter.

The matter of fact was this: when the children of Iſrael were in great diſtreſs by the invaſion of the Ammonites, and had no captain who might lead them out to battle, the Lord raiſed up Jephthah to be their deliverer; and, as it was common in ſuch caſes during the æra of the judges, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him to enable him to execute his office. And when he entered upon it, he made a vow unto the Lord, "that upon condition of "ſucceſs, whatever ſhould meet him at his doors

"when

" when he returned in peace, ſhould EITHER " be the Lord's, OR offered up for a burnt " offering." This was the vow! and if it conſiſts of two diſtinct ſentences, as I ſhall preſently ſhew it does, then Jephthah will be found to have worded it with ſo much caution, that he lay under no obligation to ſacrifice his daughter. When he returned and met his only child, the hiſtory repreſents him under great perplexity; but this did not ariſe from his concern to offer her up: there were other reaſons. The text itſelf tells us, that it was loſing all hopes of deſcendants, loſing the inheritance, which in default of heirs went to the neareſt kinſman, and many other privileges which then ſubſiſted among the Jews, but have now ceaſed among us, that occaſioned his grief: for we find, " that " ſhe went with her companions, and bewailed " her virginity upon the mountains. And it " came to paſs at the end of two months that " ſhe returned unto her father, who did with " her ACCORDING TO HIS VOW WHICH " HE HAD VOWED;" i. e. according to the FIRST PART of the vow, he dedicated her unto the Lord, and in conſequence of ſuch dedication ſhe continued the remainder of her life a virgin: for, AFTER the vow had been fulfilled, the text obſerves—" She knew no man." Hereby the purpoſe of the vow was anſwered; from the time that ſhe was dedicated unto the Lord, ſhe

ſhe continued to the end of her days in an unmarried ſtate: becauſe, as the vow happened to fall upon her while ſhe was in that ſtate, ſhe could not change it without cauſing her father to break his vow. This was the fact: whether it can be juſtified or not, is another queſtion, which no ways concerns my preſent argument. It is ſufficient for my purpoſe, that the text clearly aſſerts, ſhe was, according to the words of the vow, to be dedicated to the Lord—was dedicated—at the time of dedication was a virgin—continued ſo ſome years afterwards—and therefore continued ſo till her death.

This was, indeed, a ſingular caſe: the deſign of it was ſo uncommon, the reaſons to juſtify it ſo extraordinary, that no precedents can be drawn from hence for recluſes of any kind; it might eaſily be ſhewn to be a confutation rather of ſuch practices, if that were within the deſign of my preſent argument. But I wave this, and proceed to obſerve, that it was in her ſo remarkable an inſtance of filial piety, ſo evident a proof of her public-ſpiritedneſs, and love of her country; and theſe virtues were in her ſo eminent, in her condition ſo illuſtrious, that the nation, in gratitude to her, made it a law, ſo long as ſhe lived, "for the daughters of Iſrael to "go yearly to MAKE PRESENTS to the "daughter of Jephthah, four days in the year." And here certainly I need not point out the abſurdity

ſurdity of going year after year to make preſents to a dead perſon, though the propriety of making them to one in her ſtate muſt be manifeſt to every one.

This is the true interpretation of the hiſtory; and it is free from all the objections to which the common opinion is expoſed. It only remains, that I ſupport it by ſound arguments; and the following, I truſt, will appear to every one ſatisfactory. And,

1. The firſt is taken from the hiſtory not mentioning her being ſacrificed; and when the hiſtory is thus ſilent, from whence can it be proved that ſhe was ſacrificed? If there be any proof, it muſt be either in the words of the vow, or in the fulfilling it; but there is no proof in them: for there is nothing more ſaid in the latter, than that "he did with her ACCORDING TO HIS "VOW."—So that here we are referred to the words of the vow, to know what it was he did with her; and all that Jephthah vowed was —— "If the Lord would give him ſucceſs, whatever "met him on his return in peace, ſhould EI-"THER be the Lord's, OR he would offer it "up for a burnt-offering." Here it is plain, what he promiſed in theſe words conſiſts of two parts: for what met him and was to be dedicated to the Lord, was one thing; but what met him and was to be ſacrificed, was another: and

and it is certain theſe two things are diſtinct. Though every thing ſacrificed was dedicated to the Lord, yet every thing dedicated to the Lord was not ſacrificed. The incenſe—aromatics—veſtments—and all the apparatus of the temple were dedicated to the Lord; but yet none of them were ſacrificed. The vow then conſiſts of two ſentences, which mean two different things, and which do not follow in conſequence—"whatever meets me ſhall be the Lord's, AND "I will ſacrifice it:" but the true conſtruction is, "It ſhall be the Lord's, OR I will ſacrifice it;" for the particle uſed in the original, has the ſenſe of OR, and the tranſlators have ſo often rendered it thus, and have mentioned it even here in the margin of the bible, that no one can object to its being ſo interpreted in this place, where the whole hiſtory fixes it to this ſenſe. As the vow then conſiſts of two diſtinct parts, it would be kept by obſerving either of them---and as one thing Jephthah promiſed mentions nothing about ſacrificing his daughter---and as when he fulfilled what he had promiſed, it is only ſaid, "he did with her according to his vow," then it is evident that the hiſtory is quite ſilent about her being ſacrificed; which as clearly proves, as any negative argument can, that ſhe was not ſacrificed. But,

2. This is ſtill further evident from hence, that though Jephthah had vowed to ſacrifice whatever creature

creature ſhould firſt meet him, yet if a creature had met him which the law forbad to be offered up, 'tis certain he could not have offered it; and how then could he his daughter? If an unclean creature had firſt met him, would he have thought himſelf obliged by his vow to offer it up, when God had forbidden it? Certainly he would not. No vow can lay a man under any obligation to tranſgreſs the laws of God.

What then was to be done in this caſe? The law itſelf had provided a remedy. As the unclean creature could not be ſacrificed, it was to be ranſomed, and another allowed of for ſacrifice was to be offered up in its ſtead: and why ought not this rule to take place in the caſe of Jephthah? The ſame law, which forbad offering up an unclean creature, forbad human ſacrifices. If a vow ſhould fall upon an unclean creature, it was to be ranſomed---if it ſhould fall upon an human creature, it was alſo to be ranſomed---and God promiſed to accept of one in place of the other. As I lay great ſtreſs upon this argument, and would have it carefully conſidered, I muſt refer to the 27th chapter of Leviticus, where this point is fully treated of. Now Jephthah muſt have read this chapter. He could not but know that this was the rule preſcribed in the law of Moſes, and therefore though he had vowed to ſacrifice whatever creature ſhould firſt

meet

meet him, yet he was not obliged by this vow to ſacrifice his daughter; becauſe by the law ſhe was to be ranſomed: and this eminent judge could not be ignorant, that it was lawful to ranſom her, and abſolutely unlawful not to do it. So that, put the caſe either way, the point is clear: either her father did include her in his vow, or he did not---If he did, then ſhe was to be ranſomed---and if he did not, then ſhe could not be ſacrificed. And therefore this is another ſtrong negative argument that ſhe was not made a burnt-offering. But.

3. The evidence does not reſt here. There are other arguments, which clearly prove that ſhe was alive after her father had fulfilled his vow, and therefore of courſe ſhe could not be ſacrificed: for the ſacred hiſtorian obſerves, as a conſequence of the vow's being fulfilled---as what followed upon her entering into it, that ſhe continued a virgin all the reſt of her life---"Her "father did with her according to his vow: "AND SHE KNEW NO MAN." But when? After ſhe was ſacrificed? No. This remark would have been abſurd, when ſhe was dead; whereas being a deſcription of her after the vow was fulfilled, it muſt deſcribe ſome ſtate or condition ſhe was in, even after the completion of the vow and in conſequence of it---and this was her being or continuing afterwards a virgin.

Jephthah,

Jephthah, as I before obſerved, was not obliged by his vow to ſacrifice her---his vow would be kept by dedicating her to the Lord---he did dedicate her---after ſhe was dedicated, the ſacred hiſtorian remarks, that ſhe remained a virgin--can any thing be more plain or ſelf-evident, than that ſhe, who remained a virgin, was alſo alive? Could ſhe with any propriety be ſaid to be the one without being the other? Nay, if he had written purpoſely to prove her alive, could he have brought any ſtronger proof than this—— "That from the day of her dedication ſhe con-" tinued a virgin." This, therefore, I look upon as a poſitive argument, taken from the hiſtory itſelf, for her not having been ſacrificed. But

4. The hiſtory proceeds further, and aſſerts that ſhe was alive at leaſt ſome years after the vow was fulfilled. The words are---"And it " was a LAW in Iſrael, that the daughters of " Iſrael went yearly (to lament as it is rendered, or as it is in the original) to MAKE " PRESENTS to the daughter of Jephthah the " Gileadite four days in a year." How the tranſlators happened to miſtake this paſſage, is not eaſily to be conceived: for the word, which they here render lament, and which ſignifies to make preſents, they have given the true idea of, in every paſſage but this and another. They have tranſlated it by theſe

three words, reward, hire, gift. The uſe of it is very remarkable in the lxviiith Pſalm, 18th verſe, "Thou art gone up on high, thou haſt "led captivity captive, thou haſt received "GIFTS for men." Here they have rendered the ſame word GIFTS, which they have in the paſſage above made to ſignify lament. And gifts it does ſignify---I have their own uſage and authority to ſay it does---and, what is more, the authority of all the Lexicographers. To make preſents is, therefore, the meaning of it in this place, and when theſe preſents were made to her, ſhe could not be dead. When the daughters of Iſrael went according to the laws of the land four days in the year to viſit her, ſhe muſt be alive. She was a recluſe dedicated---therefore alive. The nature of the preſents, which they carried, ſhew, that ſhe was alive. The intention of making them proves as much. So does the ſetting apart four days in a year to make them. The very thing ſpeaks itſelf---She received theſe preſents---therefore was not dead: and beſides, by the law of Moſes it was a crime to make them to the dead. And further, it was provided by a law, that theſe preſents ſhould be made her yearly---but this law was contrary to the law of Moſes, if ſhe had been dead; and yet no cenſure is paſſed upon it-- therefore ſhe was living. And when theſe circumſtances are conſidered together, what further evidence would

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any perſon require than this? That ſhe could not be dead, who was viſited four days in every year by the daughters of Iſrael, and had then ſuch preſents made her, as none could receive, but one, who was living.

5. And what greatly ſtrengthens all theſe arguments, what demonſtrates that ſhe was alive long after the vow was fulfilled, is a proof taken from the ſacred hiſtorian's obſerving "that ſhe "RECEIVED theſe preſents. Four days in "every year the daughters of Iſrael made their "preſents TO the daughter of Jephthah"---they made them for HER USE AND BENEFIT: the particle uſed in the original does not only denote the dative caſe TO---TO the daughter of Jepthah; but frequently expreſſes ſomething further. When ſpoken of two things, where one is ſaid to act upon the other, it denotes, that one was the cauſe of the other, and produced whatever action or condition the writer was then treating of: in this ſenſe it is moſt elegantly uſed in the firſt chapter of Geneſis. When ſpoken of perſons, where one is doing ſomething to another, it often denotes that one did the action for the uſe and benefit of the other. This is a well-known idiom of the ſacred tongue; and the literal ſenſe of the word, as well as the ſcope of the hiſtory, require that in the paſſage before us it ſhould be thus underſtood. The phraſe therefore expreſſes that the daughters of Iſrael

made their preſents " for the uſe and benefit of " Jephthah's daughter." For the uſe of one who was ſacrificed? For the benefit of one who was dead? Could this poſſibly be? Certainly there can be no greater abſurdity. The dead are out of the reach of our good offices: but ſhe ſhared in them---preſents were made TO her, therefore ſhe muſt have received them---they were made for her uſe and benefit, therefore ſhe was ſenſible of them---She received them, and was ſenſible of them for ſome years after the vow was fulfilled, therefore was for ſome years after alive, and of courſe was not ſacrificed.

If this argument required any thing to add to its clearneſs and conviction, I might ſupport it by other authorities; but it ſeems to me undeniably concluſive. I ſhall only mention by way of illuſtration two hiſtorical paſſages of heathen writers, in the grand lineaments of which there is ſo great a reſemblance of the preſent hiſtory, that I doubt not they took their origin from hence; I mean the vows of Agamemnon and Idomeneus. Their caſes were almoſt the ſame as Jephthah's. A parallel might eaſily be drawn between them to ſhew this; and if it could be proved (with ſome degree of probability I think it might) that both of them took their riſe from his hiſtory, it would ſtrengthen the interpretation I have now given of it: becauſe if theſe were borrowed from it, and tradition had preſerved

ſerved perfect the chief marks of likeneſs, this would be a probable reaſon that Jephthah's daughter was not ſacrificed. Neither of their daughters were offered up, though they were in parallel circumſtances with his; and 'tis likely the tradition of her being ſaved was the foundation of their hiſtories being ſo repreſented. And,

What tends ſtrongly to confirm the opinion, that theſe hiſtories were derived from Jephthah's vow, is an inſtance of the ſame ſort of preſents being offered to certain recluſes in the heathen world; and it will be very difficult to aſſign any ſatisfactory reaſons for the origin of ſuch a ceremony, unleſs we trace it up to the days of Jephthah. It was in all appearance a corruption of his hiſtory. Men retained the knowledge of the fact, after they had forgot the reaſons upon which he acted, and this led them to engraft on it numerous errors. The practice of dedicating recluſes without any obligation or neceſſity, muſt, I think, have had its original from hence. It took its riſe from a groſs miſtake of this hiſtory. It could not come into the heathen world from reaſon---it was unreaſonable; nor from nature---it was unnatural: there muſt have been ſome authority which at firſt ſeemed to countenance ſuch a practice; and by length of time, and the corruptions of mankind, the caſe of Jephthah might be ſo much miſtaken, as to be

be made a precedent for that very error, of which it is a moſt clear confutation. Now if this cuſtom among the Heathens came from Jephthah, it will greatly eſtabliſh the interpretation of the text. This it will prove at leaſt, that they who were dedicated, were not ſacrificed; and that they, who received certain preſents by virtue of ſuch dedication, were indiſputably alive. The Heathens made the ſame preſents to their recluſes, as the daughters of Iſrael did in the caſe before us. This is abundantly evident from their own writers. And for what reaſon ſhould they thus agree in this ceremony, unleſs it had been derived from one common cauſe? And ſo far as this is probable, it muſt be admitted, that if the Heathens offered theſe preſents to none but them who were alive, then ſhe who received the ſame preſents was alſo alive.

I might have been more copious upon theſe arguments, but they ſeemed to me ſo plain and concluſive, that they needed not be further inſiſted on: and now the caſe hath been fairly ſtated, I leave it to every impartial man to determine on which ſide the truth prevails. The common-received opinion was, that Jephthah, according to his vow, ſacrificed his daughter, but this opinion I ſhewed was not defenſible: becauſe human ſacrifices were forbidden by the law of Moſes, and Jephthah did not tranſgreſs this

this law; for he was directed by the Spirit of God in making his vow---he was never puniſhed for it---he is commended for it by St. Paul---and had ſucceſs in conſequence of it. And if the common opinion cannot be ſupported againſt theſe objections, much leſs againſt the arguments brought to prove that ſhe was not ſacrificed---the hiſtorian has neither included her in the vow, nor in the fulfilling it---and if ſhe had been included, the law had provided a ranſom, whereby the vow would be kept, and ſhe not made a burnt-offering. From theſe negative arguments I endeavoured to eſtabliſh the true interpretation, which was ſettled beyond all doubt from certain paſſages in the hiſtory, which gave her the attributes of a living perſon ſome years after her father had fulfilled his vow: and I think no truth can be more evident than this, that ſhe could not be ſacrificed and dead, who ſtill had the attributes of a living perſon.

Thus is the character of Jephthah vindicated, and neither raſhneſs nor immorality entered into the making of his vow, or the fulfilling it: but this eminent judge appears to be diſtinguiſhed for his faith and other virtues. The ſcripture alſo is cleared in this particular, and reconciled to reaſon and common ſenſe: and this hiſtorical paſſage was recorded, as all ſcripture was, that the man of God might be perfect thoroughly furniſhed to every good work.

THE

PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES:

INTERPRETED IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

ST. OLAVE'S, SOUTHWARK,

OCTOBER 24, 1756.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH-WARDENS,
AND OF A GREAT PART OF THE CONGREGATION.

And you being dead in your ſins, and the uncircumciſion of your fleſh, hath he quickened together with Chriſt, having forgiven you all treſpaſſes. Col. ii. 13.

TO THE

CHURCH-WARDENS

AND

PARISHIONERS

OF

ST. OLAVE'S,

THIS PLAIN

DISCOURSE,

MADE PUBLIC AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS HUMBLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL SERVANT IN CHRIST,

WILLIAM ROMAINE.

THE

PARABLE OF THE DRY BONES:

EZEK. XXXVII. 4.

O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

ALL our ideas of ſpiritual objects are comparative, taken from matter, and carried up to ſpirit. In our preſent ſtate we have no knowledge but what is firſt ſenſible, but what comes into the mind from ſome of the ſenſes, and is borrowed from objects upon which they can make their obſervation. This is at preſent a received truth among the learned. Happy for us that it is received, becauſe ſcripture knowledge is conveyed in this manner. God accommodates his inſtruction to our capacities: he makes uſe of outward and ſenſible objects to explain inward and ſpiritual: he applies the book of nature to illuſtrate the book of grace, thus bringing heavenly things down to the level of our underſtandings, and ſetting them (as it were) before our eyes by their natural pictures and juſt ſimilitudes.

The

The very language of the Old Teſtament is of this nature. Every word ſtands for ſome ſenſible object, and from thence raiſes the idea of ſome correſpondent ſpiritual object. Since this is the genius of the Hebrew tongue, it is not to be wondered, that it ſhould ſo much abound with what ſome call figures and metaphors; theſe are not the ornaments of language, or beauties of diction, as it hath been ſuppoſed, but they are of the eſſence of the ſacred tongue: neither is this method of uſing natural objects to give us ideas of ſpiritual the oriental way of writing, as we have been told, as if it delighted in bold figures and lofty metaphors; but it is the method of inſtruction, which man's preſent ſtate renders neceſſary. While we are here in the body, we have no means of diſcovering ſpiritual objects but by divine teaching. God informs us, that ſuch an object in the natural world ſtands for, and is the perfect repreſentation of ſuch an object in the ſpiritual world; and this kind of information he has given us in every Hebrew word: like a parable, it teaches and illuſtrates heavenly things under the expreſſive figures of earthly. And while men were accuſtomed to this method of inſtruction by the very nature of their language, one might expect it would run alſo into their compoſitions: which we find from fact that it has. The Old Teſtament, the prophetical writings eſpecially, abound with

with natural images; and the great prophet of the New Teſtament made ſuch uſe of them, that without a parable ſpake he not unto the people. Wherever he was, the objects before him gave him an opportunity to ſpiritualize them---And this application of material things to illuſtrate ſpiritual, is what the ſcripture calls a parable. Of this kind are the words of the text. They are a parable in which the all-wiſe ſpirit teaches us the things of God, by comparing them to material and outward objects. The leſſon he would teach us is of eternal moment; and may the Lord God take the veil off all your hearts while I am explaining this part of the Old Teſtament. May he give you to underſtand it, and to profit from it, and to experience the truth of the whole parable in your own ſouls.

The prophet gives us the literal ſenſe in theſe words. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, "and carried me out in the ſpirit of the Lord, "and ſet me down in the midſt of the valley, "which was full of bones. And cauſed me to "paſs by them round about, and behold there "were very many in the open valley, and lo, "they were very dry. And he ſaid unto me, "ſon of man, Can theſe bones live? And I "anſwered, O Lord God thou knoweſt. And "again he ſaid unto me, prophecy upon theſe "bones, and ſay unto them, O ye dry bones,

"hear

" hear the word of the Lord. Thus ſaith the " Lord God, unto theſe bones, behold I will " cauſe breath to enter into you, and ye ſhall " live. And I will lay ſinews upon you, and " will bring up fleſh upon you, and cover you " with ſkin, and put breath in you, and ye ſhall " live, and ye ſhall know that I am the Lord. " So I prophecied, as I was commanded, and " as I prophecied, there was a noiſe, and be- " hold a ſhaking, and the bones came together " bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo " the ſinews and the fleſh came up upon them, " and the ſkin covered them above, but there " was no breath in them. Then ſaid he unto " me, prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, ſon " of man, and ſay to the wind, thus ſaith the " Lord God, come from the four winds, O " breath, and breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they " may live. So I prophecied as he commanded " me, and the breath came into them, and they " lived, and ſtood up upon their feet an exceed- " ing great army."

Now what inſtruction are we to receive from this ſcripture. It was certainly applicable to the ſtate of the Jewiſh church, which was then deprived of all its ordinances. It was carried away captive into Babylon, where it had neither a temple nor the preſence of God, neither an officiating prieſt, nor a ſacrifice, and was as void of ſpiritual life as theſe dry bones were of ani-

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mal life---To the church in this ſtate the application is made---God himſelf makes this uſe of it. " Then he ſaid unto me, Son of man, theſe " bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael: behold, " they ſay, Our bones are dried, and our hope " is loſt, we are cut off for our parts: there- " fore prophecy and ſay unto them, Thus ſaith " the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will " open your graves, and cauſe you to come up " out of your graves, and bring you into the " land of Iſrael, and ye ſhall know that I am " the Lord, when I have opened your graves, " O my people, and brought you up out of " your graves, and ſhall put my ſpirit in you, " and ye ſhall live, and I ſhall place you in your " own land, then ye ſhall know that I the " Lord have ſpoken it and performed it, ſaith " the Lord."

In this ſenſe the ſcripture was then fulfilled, when God did bring the Jews from their graves: he placed them in their own land, and reſtored the life of their civil and eccleſiaſtical policy. He performed what he had ſpoken, and they knew that he was the Lord their God. But is this the full ſenſe and meaning of the parable? Are we to underſtand nothing more by it, than this outward completion? Are we to reſt here? By no means. It is of more general uſe and inſtruction. We may all receive profit from it,

as I hope the following reaſons will convince you. And,

Firſt, We are aſſured by the apoſtle, that "no "ſcripture is of private interpretation." It was all written for the general uſe of the church of Chriſt, in all times and circumſtances, therefore we may not yet reſt in the private interpretation of this parable, applicable to the Jewiſh church in the Babyloniſh bondage, but we muſt look out for a more extenſive ſenſe, applicable to the catholic church of Chriſt: For

Secondly, We otherwiſe get no farther than the literal ſenſe. It was a matter of fact, that God did bring the Jews after 70 years bondage up again to their own land. This is the letter of the parable. But the apoſtle forbids us to reſt here. We muſt ſeek for the ſpiritual ſenſe; "Becauſe the letter," he ſays, "killeth, but the "ſpirit giveth life." And that we may and muſt attain the ſpiritual, which is the life-giving ſenſe, he expreſly teaches us, when he declares

Thirdly, That God's outward dealings with the Jewiſh church were a type and figure of his ſpiritual dealings with the chriſtian church. For thus he ſays, 1 Cor. x. 11. "That all theſe things "happened unto them for examples, and they "are written for our admonition." Among the reſt, what happened to them in the Babyloniſh captivity was for an example to us, and this

parable treating of their ſtate under it, and of their deliverance from it, was written for our admonition, and is to have its completion in us ſpiritually, as it had in them bodily.

Theſe arguments may ſuffice to prove, that this parable cannot be of a private interpretation, It has a ſpiritual as well as a literal ſenſe, which belongs to us, which is to ſet before us an example, that we are to follow, and from which we are to receive admonition and inſtructions to our ſouls. And it ſets before our eyes ſome of the great truths of the goſpel in a moſt ſtriking light. We have here an affecting repreſentation of our loſt and dead ſtate, while we are in the bondage of ſin, and of our happy revival to newneſs of life, when we are born again of the ſpirit of God. Theſe are the great out-lines of the parable, which may the divine grace deeply impreſs upon all your hearts, while I am giving you a ſhort paraphraſe upon the words, and then applying them as God ſhall enable me to each of your conſciences.

The prophet begins with informing us, that it was the eternal Spirit who ſhewed him this viſion. "The hand of the Lord (the power of Jehovah) "was upon me, and carried me in the ſpirit of "the Lord, and ſet me down in the midſt of the "valley, which was full of bones," even in the midſt of the valley of the ſhadow of death, where I ſaw ſin and corruption reigning, and

where I beheld the ſouls of men as dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, as dead to God and to the things of ſpiritual and divine life, as dry and dead bones are to the offices of animal life. When the ſcripture ſpeaks thus of the death of the ſoul, the idea is evidently taken from the death of the body: for as the body, when it dies, ceaſes to be actuated by the natural agents which carry on animal life; ſo the ſoul, when it dies, ceaſes to be actuated by the divine agents, which carry on ſpiritual life. But this ſpiritual death does not imply any diſſolution or abſolute inſenſibility; it only ſignifies, that the ſinful ſoul is cut off from all communion with God, who is the fountain of life; it is alienated from the life of God, and has loſt its life of happineſs in him, being now dead to his grace, as it may, ere long, be dead to his glory. And what then could be a more proper repreſentation of a ſoul thus dead in ſin, than a body dead in the grave? And what could paint in ſtronger colours the exceeding deadneſs of a ſinful ſoul, than the exceeding dryneſs of the bones of a dead body? Under the death of the outward man the prophet was made to ſee the death of the inward man. The ſpirit of the Lord gave him a full view of theſe ſouls dead in ſin: "For he cauſed me," ſays he, "to paſs "by them round about, to go all round them, "and behold there were very many upon the "face

" face of the valley, and lo they were very dry ;" their number was very great, and their condition was very dead ; they had ſo long, ſo entirely loſt all ſpiritual life, that the bones of dead men, from which the fleſh is worn quite off, and which are become exceeding dry, were not farther removed from life, than the ſouls thus dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. After the prophet had gone all round them, " The Lord ſaid unto " him, Son of man, can theſe bones live ? Is " there any power that is able to quicken them " to newneſs of life ? And I anſwered, O " Lord God, thou knoweſt"—Thou only knoweſt, what power is requiſite to raiſe a ſoul dead in ſin. All the powers in nature I am certain cannot do it. They can no more give life to a dead ſoul, than they can raiſe the bones of a dead man to life. Although this was the prophet's opinion, yet the Lord ſaid unto him, " Prophecy unto theſe bones, and ſay unto " them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the " Lord. Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I " will lay ſinews upon you, and will bring up " fleſh upon you, and cover you with ſkin, and " put breath in you, and ye ſhall live, and ye " ſhall know that I am the Lord. So I pro- " phecied as I was commanded." He did not conſult carnal reaſon which would have ſhewed him the abſurdity of doing what God commanded ; but he inſtantly obeyed, and began preaching

ing to the dry bones, and calling upon them to hear the word of the Lord. Would not ſome of you, my brethren, have taken him to be quite diſordered in his head, if you had ſeen him preaching in a church-yard to a great number of dead dry bones? Would not you have thought Ezekiel as mad as any of our modern enthuſiaſts? For men reproach and ridicule the miniſters of the goſpel for doing the very ſame thing that he did. We are reckoned viſionaries and madmen, and what not, becauſe after his example we preach the word of the Lord to the dead, When we tell ſinners, that they are all dead, dead to God, dead to grace, and may ſoon die to glory; and when we call upon them in the name of the Lord to awake from the dead ſleep of ſin, that Chriſt may give them life, then they may mock and ridicule. The ſame men would have made as great a jeſt of the prophet, if they had ſeen him preaching to a congregation of dry bones. But he preached as he was commanded, and ſo do we. Lord grant the ſucceſs may be the ſame. The bleſſed Jeſus ſends us to preach the word to dry bones, and we obey. He ſends us out in his name, with his commiſſion, and in his ſtrength, and promiſes to be with us by his Spirit. We ſhould be enthuſiaſts indeed, if we thought ourſelves able to awaken one dead ſinner without the effectual working of his power. We know,

that

that it is he who worketh in us and by us: for without him we can do nothing: and therefore let men reproach us for doing his work. We will go on, pitying, and praying for them, and the more they reproach us, the more we will preach, and the more earneſtly, to the dead in ſin—And who knows but as the work is God's, he may ſpeak to the inward ears of the ſoul, while we are ſpeaking to the outward ears of the body, and bid the ſinner awake and live. Glory be to his holy name, for that he often accompanies this fooliſhneſs of preaching with his divine power. Thanks be to him for ſetting his ſeal to the truth of our words, by awakening the dead through our weak miniſtry. O that his good ſpirit may now ſeal the word, and by his bleſſing fulfil what follows in the parable—"So I prophecied as I was commanded, and "as I prophecied there was a noiſe," in the Hebrew a voice, namely, the voice of God. The prophet was ſpeaking, and to ſay that there was a voice while he was ſpeaking would be mere tautology, and unmeaning repetition, if we apply it to him. But if while he ſpake the power of the Lord was preſent, then the drieſt bones would hear; and if while we addreſs ourſelves to the outward ears the voice of God carries the ſound at the ſame time to the heart, then even the dead hear this almighty voice, and awake, and ſee their guilt and danger, and

begin

begin to be concerned about their ſalvation. When the ſpirit of God ſpeaks conviction to the heart, theſe effects always follow, and it is evident the voice was his from what is mentioned next in the parable; for as I prophecied there was a voice, and behold, a ſhaking—Behold, a matter worthy of the cloſeſt attention, there was a great ſhaking among the dry bones, even as it were an earthquake among them: for the word rendered ſhaking is the ſcripture term for an earthquake. And behold, there is as great a ſhaking in the ſoul of the ſinner, when he is awakened and convinced of ſin; he that had been dead in ſin, helpleſs and loſt for ever in himſelf, then begins to quake and tremble—He ſees the corruption of his nature—odious and abominable altogether—He ſees his life was one continued ſcene of open injury to God, and diſhonour to his law—Looking back he beholds nothing but guilt—Looking forward he beholds nothing but everlaſting deſtruction, upon which fear and a horrible dread overwhelm him. The holy Spirit ſets home theſe convictions upon the conſcience. He gives it ſuch a ſight of the guilt and danger of ſin, that the ſinner ſees he cannot ſave himſelf. In this diſtreſs he continues, until the remainder of the parable be fulfilled in him: for we read, that after the ſhaking--

" The bones came together, bone to his bone.
" And when I beheld, lo the ſinews and the

" fleſh

" fleſh came up upon them, and the ſkin co-
" vered them above, but there was no breath
" in them." Here is in the letter of the para-
ble the outſide and ſhape of man---a body, but
it is inanimate---there is no life in it. So in the
ſpiritual ſenſe, if the ſoul ſhould reſt in the ex-
ternals of religion, and ſit down content with
any thing ſhort of the vital influence of the Holy
Spirit, there is no life in it. Whatever may
promiſe to animate it, ſtill it will remain dead.
Good works, ordinances, orthodoxy, are but the
letter that killeth, unleſs the ſpirit that giveth life,
be in them. You may belong to the beſt con-
ſtituted church upon earth, which has ſound
articles and creeds like ſtrong bones and ſinews,
and fleſh upon them, and which has a good litur-
gy, and decent public worſhip, like a fair ſkin
to cover all; and yet in this communion your
ſoul may be dead: for theſe external privileges
cannot give the breath of life to the ſoul. " It
" is the ſpirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth
" nothing," the fleſh (the externals of religion)
profiteth nothing unleſs the ſpirit animate them,
as we learn from the next words in the parable.
" Then ſaid he unto me, Prophecy unto the
" wind and ſay, Thus ſaith the Lord God,
" Come from the four winds, O breath, and
" breathe upon theſe ſlain, that they may live.
" So I prophecied as he commanded me, and
" the breath came into them, and they lived, and
" ſtood

" ſtood up upon their feet, an exceeding great " army." Glory be to God for daily fulfilling this part of the parable. His good ſpirit daily awakens poor dead ſinners, and puts the breath of divine life into them; and this he does by the weakeſt means, even by the fooliſhneſs of preaching, that it may appear the power comes from him, and that all the glory may return to him. He ſends us out to preach, bids us call to the dead---We do as we are commanded; but we know that we could no more raiſe a dead ſoul from the grave of ſin, than we could raiſe a dead body from the grave of corruption. We ſpeak our Lord's word, and he bleſſes them. He ſends his grace along with them, and the dead hear his voice. They awake. They ſee their guilt and their danger: at the ſight of which their hearts ſink within them---they find themſelves periſhing---and a great trembling and violent ſhaking ſeizes them. Fear is on every ſide. No way is left to eſcape, but to fly to the Saviour of ſinners. And as ſoon as they turn to him, he receives them gladly. He ſends the Holy Spirit (the deareſt pledge of his love) to give them evidence of their new birth unto righteouſneſs, and to aſſure them of their juſtification to life. Then they live unto God---and " ſtand " up upon their feet," being enabled to go forward in the ways of holineſs---" An exceeding " great army,"---an innumerable multitude, which

which no man could number, and they all hold ſwords, being expert in war, a great army of the faithful ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt fighting their way to a crown of righteouſneſs, againſt all the oppoſition of ſin and ſatan, of the world and the fleſh, and never quitting the field of battle, until the captain of their ſalvation place the never-fading crown upon their heads.

This is, I think, the ſpiritual ſenſe of the parable. We have in it, a deſcription of man in his natural ſtate as dead in treſpaſſes and ſins---in his awakened ſtate as unable to do any thing to raiſe himſelf from the death of ſin to newneſs of life---and in his juſtified ſtate, as raiſed to ſpiritual and divine life by Chriſt, who is the life of the world, and by the effectual working of his good ſpirit. Theſe great truths are beautifully painted in the parable. It ſets them before our eyes in a very affecting manner. And I hope every one of you has been properly affected, according to the view he has had of the ſtate of his ſoul. But whatever impreſſion has been made. I cannot leave the ſubject, without making ſome ſhort practical remarks, and may the Almighty Spirit apply them to the neceſſities of thoſe who are concerned in them.

And firſt, I have a word to the dry bones, to the dead in ſin. We are all in this ſtate by nature---dead in treſpaſſes and ſins---dead to God, and

and to the things of God. If you believe the ſcripture you cannot deny this. It deſcribes your ſouls to be as incapable of performing any of the offices of ſpiritual life as the dry bones of a dead body are performing the offices of animal life. If God and his word be true, this is the condition of every one of us by nature, and it is the firſt work of grace to convince us of it. When the Holy Spirit begins to move in the ſinner's heart, he convinces him of his loſt and helpleſs ſtate, and he ſees and finds that without Chriſt he can do nothing. And can every one of you ſay from his own experience--- I have had this conviction. If you had, then one ſtep is taken---may he who hath begun, carry on the work, until he make you living members of Chriſt's myſtical body. But if you was never yet convinced of your being by nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, then you are ſtill alienated from the life of God: for you will not ſeek life from him, until you be convinced of your want of it. As tranſgreſſors, his holy law condemns you to death. The ſolemn ſentence is paſt "The ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall "die." Did you never read this ſentence as ſtanding out againſt yourſelf? Have you never had any ſenſe of the exquiſite miſery of being eternally ſeparated from God the fountain of life? Have you no ſenſe of it at preſent, no thought, no concern about being alienated in body and ſoul,

and

and to all eternity, from God and his glory? Oh Almighty Saviour, if there be any perſons here preſent in this ſtate, ſpeak to the dry bones. They can hear no voice but thine. O let the all-reviving ſound, which Lazarus's dead body heard, now be heard in every dead heart. Now Lord Jeſus prove thyſelf to be the reſurrection and the life. Call to every unawakened ſoul in this congregation, and ſay, "Awake thou that ſleep-"eſt, and ariſe from the dead." O Almighty God and Saviour, ſend theſe words home to every dead ſinner, that he may awake and be concerned for his ſalvation, and thereby may follow me in my ſecond remark.

While the prophet was preaching, the voice of God ſpake to the heart, while he ſpake to the outward ears, and "behold there was a great "ſhaking." The ſinner ſhook and trembled for fear. The Lord ſhewed him his former dead ſtate, and his preſent danger, and at the ſight of both an horrible dread overwhelmed him. He beheld the perfect purity and ſpirituality of the divine law—he ſaw the vile and loathſome nature of ſin—he beheld the holineſs, and truth, and juſtice of God, armed with almighty power, and ready to deſtroy him. Conſcience witneſſed againſt him, and haunted him with its horrors night and day. He found that hell was his deſert, and he ſaw no way open to eſcape it. However hardened and obdurate he had been before,

before, yet all theſe circumſtances put together ſet him a ſhaking and trembling. Had he been in an earthquake, when the ground heaved and toſſed with ſuch violent ſhocks, that he could not ſtand upon it, and had he ſeen it opening its mouth in many a hideous crack, and ſwallowing up multitudes all around him, he could not have ſhaked and trembled more. His ſoul fainted within him; and he had not a ray of hope left, unleſs God would be pleaſed to ſtretch out his omnipotent arm, and to ſave him from going down to the pit of deſtruction.

And can every one of you, my brethren, remember when this was your caſe? If you were never in any diſtreſs, leſs or more, at the ſight of your ſinfulneſs and miſery—Oh conſider I beſeech you your danger. You are ſtill ſecure in ſin, yea dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. When the holy Spirit is come to awaken your ſoul, his firſt work is to convince you of ſin, and if he has not begun this work, fancy yourſelf to be alive ---reform your outward life---become civil, and moral, and honeſt, yet you have not taken one ſtep in the divine life; if you have never been deeply convinced of ſin, you have not been ſtirred up nor ſhaken from the lees---your poor ſoul is ſtill dead to the grace of God, and unleſs you be convinced of ſin it will, ere long, be dead to his glory. But if you have been awakened, and convinced of ſin, then the parable is ſo far happily fulfilled

fulfilled in you. There has been a ſhaking among the dry bones. They have been trembling and quaking, and with great reaſon. Sinners while under conviction, have every thing to fear that is terrible. They have an offended God ſet in battle array againſt them, a broken law thundering out its curſes upon their guilty heads, conſcience owning the guilt, the devil ready to torment, and hell open to receive them: and if the proſpect of theſe things be not terrible, what is? Am I now ſpeaking to any of you, who ſays, I am acquainted with theſe terrors---I have been made to ſee my ſinfulneſs and my danger, and I find my helpleſs loſt condition---dangers ſo ſurround me on every ſide, that I know not whither to turn myſelf. Is this the language of thine heart? Art thou indeed ſhaken from all truſt and confidence in ſelf? Then turn thee to the bleſſed Jeſus. He is a ſaviour for thee. Such as thou art he came to ſave---ſuch poor, loſt and ruined ſinners. Wait on him. Be found in the ways of his ordinances, and he will ſupply all thy wants. He will give thee freely out of his fulneſs, grace for grace, and glory to crown all his graces.

But, methinks I hear ſome afflicted ſoul reply ---I have been waiting upon the Lord Jeſus long, but have found no comfort. It may be ſo. But who is to blame? May you not have ſought comfort in a wrong manner, by placing religion in the form

form inſtead of the power, according to what is deſcribed in the third part of the parable: Where we have all the parts of an human body, but for want of breath there was no life in them, and this was written to ſhew, that you are not to ſtop ſhort of Chriſt and his comforts, by reſting in externals. You are not to be content with the form and the outſide of religion, without the life and ſpirit of it. And herein the parable condemns thoſe perſons, who upon their being firſt brought under ſome concern about their ſouls, are apt to truſt in duties, inſtead of going to Chriſt. They ſet about reforming their outward behaviour, go to church, ſay their prayers ---read the ſcriptures---give alms---attend conſtantly at the ſacrament, ſuppoſing that theſe outward things can give life to the ſoul: they reſt in them, as of themſelves ſufficient and meritorious, which is ſetting them up againſt our Saviour, and reſting in them as ſaviours, whereas Chriſt alone has life to give to the dead in ſin. "I am the life," ſays he. Whoſoever is not united to him by faith, has no true ſpiritual life in him, as he found, who had more duties to depend upon than any of us have, and yet he counted them but droſs and dung that he might win Chriſt. "The life which I now live in the "fleſh, ſays the bleſſed Apoſtle, I live by the "faith of the ſon of God;" it is a ſpiritual life derived from the ſon of God, and received from him

him by faith, which is the breath of life in the juſtified ſoul, inſpired into it by the holy Spirit, as the laſt part of the parable proves. The dry bones had come together, the ſinews and fleſh had grown up upon them, the ſkin was ſpread over all---here were all the parts of an human body, but there was no life, until the ſpirit of the Lord put breath into them, and they lived, and ſtood up. It is the very ſame caſe with the ſinful ſoul. Nothing can give it life but the Spirit of God. He is to the ſoul what breath is to the body. He is ſo much the breath of life, that in the Old Teſtament and the New the ſame word which ſtands for the breath that ſupports the life of the body, ſtands for the holy Spirit, who ſupports the life of the ſoul. The air that we breathe, and the holy Spirit, have but one name in ſcripture. And therefore as the body is not alive, until it breathes, ſo neither is the ſoul alive to God, until the holy Spirit infuſe into it the breath of life. And as the body is alive only ſo long as it breathes, in like manner the ſoul lives to God only ſo long as the holy Spirit breathes in it. Let his influence ſtop, and the life of grace is at an end, as the life of the body is at an end, ſo ſoon as its breathing is ſtopt.

My brethren, this is one of the moſt important truths in the Chriſtian religion. It is the holy Spirit and his work upon the heart that makes

us Chriſtians ; " For if any man have not the " ſpirit of Chriſt he is none of his"---He is no Chriſtian. So ſay the oracles of truth. If any man---be he ever ſo moral and honeſt---a ſtrict obſerver of outward duties, a good church man ---a charitable man, yet if he has not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his---he is none of Chriſt's family. He is not a living member of Chriſt's body. He may have a name that he liveth, but he is dead. And what good would it do you to have the name of a living man, if your body was dead? If you could neither ſtir nor move, if your breath was ſtopt, would it be of any ſervice to you, that men ſaid you was alive? Could their ſaying ſo raiſe you to live? Infinitely more uſeleſs is it to have a name, that your ſoul liveth, while it is dead to God. Hear this, ye formal profeſſors, who are deſtitute of the life and power of religion. You are but ſo many dry bones. And what vaſt numbers have we of them in all our congregations! Oh that the Almighty Spirit may put the breath of life into you, and quicken you together with Chriſt, and make you ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus!

Perhaps you think you don't ſtand in need of his grace. Then, if God be true, you have no more life in your ſoul than theſe dry bones had, when they lay looſe and ſcattered up and down in the valley. Until he put his life-giving Spirit into you, you are as dead as they were. Or perhaps

haps you think you may have his grace, and not know it. That cannot be. The holy Spirit is the convincer of ſin. When he awakens your conſcience, fills it with conviction, and there is a ſhaking in every part and faculty, what a ſtrange ſhaking would it be, if you ſhould neither know it, nor feel it. So again, when he infuſes into you the breath of life, and you live to God, what an unaccountable breath would this be, if having it and living by it, you ſhould not know it? Did theſe dry bones know, when they were alive, and ſtood upon their feet? Moſt certainly they did. Do you know now, whether you breathe and live, or not? Juſt the ſame evidence has the ſoul of its being alive to God. "We know that we "are paſſed, ſays an Apoſtle, from death unto "life." We know the ſame, ſay all his diſciples---We know that God hath given to us eternal life---We have his ſpirit the witneſs, the earneſt of it in our hearts, and the world may ſee the evidence of it in our lives and converſations.

But is not this, will ſome ſay, talking like enthuſiaſts? It is their very language. But then it is alſo the language of ſcripture. The Old Teſtament is full of this enthuſiaſm---The New abounds with it. You can ſcarce open the bible any where, without finding ſome high flights of enthuſiaſm, ſomething concerning being quickened by the ſpirit, being born of the ſpirit,

and raiſed up by him, being inſtructed and led by the ſpirit, having the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart by the holy Ghoſt, concerning his dwelling in believers, and their having the witneſs of the ſpirit, and being ſealed by him, and ſanctified, and ſtrengthened with might by him in the inner man. If theſe ſcripture-expreſſions ſavor ſtrongly of enthuſiaſm, ſo does the liturgy of our church. Every day we pray to God that he would not take his holy Spirit from us, but would cleanſe our hearts by the inſpiration of his holy Spirit, and would enable us by his holy inſpiration, to think thoſe things that be good, and by his merciful guiding to perform the ſame, would renew us daily by his holy Spirit, and grant us by the ſame ſpirit to have a right judgment in all things: We pray to him to comfort us, even that we may rejoice evermore in his holy comfort, and that he may exalt us unto the ſame place, whither our Saviour Chriſt is gone before. No words can be ſtronger than the petitions, which we have been offering up this very day at the throne of grace---" O God, forasmuch as " without thee, we are not able to pleaſe thee; " mercifully grant that thy holy Spirit may in all " things direct and rule our hearts, through Jeſus " Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*" Such is the language of ſcripture, and the language of our church. They both ſpeak of the holy Spirit, as the vital principle of the chriſtian religion, ſo that

that if you take him out of it, you leave its profeſſors like a body without breath: for the holy Spirit is to their ſouls what breath is to their bodies, inſomuch that they cannot live one moment to God without his continual inſpiration. And ſurely it is not enthuſiaſm to ſay, that our bodies cannot live without breath, and how then can it be enthuſiaſm to ſay, that our ſouls cannot live without the holy Spirit, who is the breath of our ſpiritual life?

Since then there lays no objection againſt the doctrine contained in the parable. Since all men are by nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. Since nothing can raiſe them from the death of ſin to newneſs of life, but the inſpiration of the Almighty, and ſince Chriſt has purchaſed life for the dead in ſin, and the holy Spirit is to apply it and to quicken them, the diſcourſe is now brought to a point. Only one queſtion now remains, and that is, Has this parable been fulfilled in us? Can every one of us lay his hand upon his heart, and declare in the preſence of God, "I know this ſcripture to be true by my "own experience. The ſpirit of God ſhewed "me my guilt and danger, at the ſight of which "my unbelieving heart ſhook and trembled for "fear, but he gave me grace to reſolve, that I "would ſeek Jeſus, until I found him: On him "I was kept waiting, enabled to reject all hopes "in my own power or works until he put his

"witneſſing

" witneſſing ſpirit within me, and I knew that " I was one of the children of God by faith in " Chriſt Jeſus." Can every one of you ſay, that God hath dealt thus with your ſouls? If he hath, happy are ye. In you this ſcripture is fulfilled. But if he hath not, it was written for your inſtruction---to teach you, how God would deal with you, if ever he bring you to himſelf. O that his good Spirit may deal with you in the manner here deſcribed. That he may now begin, and carry on the work of grace ſtep by ſtep, until all the dry bones, until every dead ſinner be awakened, and hear the word of the Lord, until every awakened ſinner be pardoned and juſtified, and ſanctified, and at laſt glorified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God. May he who is almighty to quicken the dry bones, exert his power in quickening all this congregation to a life of grace here, and to a life of eternal glory hereafter. Grant this bleſſed God and father, through the merits of thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, and by the influence of the holy Spirit upon all our hearts now and for ever. *Amen* and *Amen*.

A

METHOD FOR PREVENTING THE FREQUENCY OF ROBBERIES AND MURDERS:

PROPOSED IN A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT

ST. GEORGE'S HANOVER-SQUARE,

AT

ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST,

AND

AT SEVERAL OTHER PLACES IN LONDON.

The Sin of Judah is written with a Pen of Iron, and with the Point of a Diamond; it is graven upon the Table of their heart, Jer. xvii. 1.

METHOD FOR PREVENTING

ROBBERIES AND MURDERS.

MATTHEW XV. 19, 20.

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe-witneſs, blaſphemies: theſe are the things which defile a man.

ALL theſe evil things, which defile the man, proceed from the heart: here the deſires are firſt formed, and from hence they flow out, and put in motion, and animate the other faculties. And ſuch as the fountain is, ſuch are the ſtreams which flow from it. If the heart be evil and corrupt in itſelf, the thoughts of the heart will alſo be evil and corrupt, and the actions which are directed by theſe thoughts muſt alſo partake of their evil and corruption. For the heart thinks, reſolves, and then acts; and if the thought be evil, the reſolution and the act, which are the direct conſequences of it, muſt be alſo evil. Nothing but evil can flow from an evil heart.

Whenever the ſcripture ſpeaks of the faculties of the ſoul, it uſes words borrowed from the faculties

faculties of the body, becauſe we are not capable of forming any idea of ſpiritual, unleſs they be compared to material objects. The ſoul has its ſpring and principle of motion as well as the body, and this we call the heart, borrowing the word from that part, which is known to be the ſpring and principle of all the motions in the human frame: for from the heart proceeds that vital blood, which carries on every operation throughout the body, and from which every veſſel and organ has its proper nouriſhment miniſtered. The heart has the ſame uſe and office in our little world, as the ſun has in the great world, being the fountain of life and genial warmth, of growth and ſtrength in the microcoſm of man. And when we apply this word to the ſoul, we fix the ſame meaning to it. The heart is that part which puts all the other faculties of the ſoul in motion, it is the fountain from whence our thoughts flow, and our reſolutions and actions are only ſo many ſtreams, which take a good or a bad tincture according to the nature of the ſpring, from whence they have their origin.

In this ſenſe our bleſſed Lord here ſpeaks of the ſoul: he makes the heart the fruitful cauſe of every vice, ſuppoſing it to be polluted even at the very fountain head; and how then is it poſſible there ſhould be any thing but pollution in the channels, which iſſue from it? If the heart

be

be corrupt, ſo will be the actions. From an evil heart nothing can proceed, but murder, adultery, fornication, theft, falſe-witneſs, and blaſphemy: for when the principle which ſets all theſe in motion is defiled, what can ſpring from it but defilement?

This is our Lord's doctrine, and never was there greater occaſion to conſider it, than in the preſent times, when theſe vices are grown to ſuch an enormous height, that they are openly committed in defiance of all law, divine and human. The legiſlature has been lately alarmed at their prodigious increaſe, and has been trying to find out ſome effectual remedy: but what has been hitherto attempted has not met with the deſired ſucceſs. Robberies, murders, &c. are ſtill as common as ever, and will become daily more common, unleſs we ſtrike at the root of the evil. The heart is the cauſe of all, and no act of parliament can touch the heart. It is out of the reach of every human tribunal. The vices which by our natural corruption have got into the heart, cannot be diſplaced by the wiſeſt laws and edicts; theſe can only regulate the outward actions. The polluted fountain is ſtill inacceſſible to any authority but the great Creator's. He alone can give the Almighty fiat, let it be clean, and it is clean. Nothing can purify it from the unclean thoughts of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. but his divine grace and virtue; to which

which may he enable us now to commit the guidance of our hearts. We beſeech thee to take them, O eternal ſpirit, under thy gracious influence, and let no unclean thought enter into them, while we are meditating upon theſe words of our God and Saviour--" Out of the heart " proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, " fornications, thefts, falſe-witneſs, blaſphemies: " theſe are the things which defile a man."

Firſt, It is here aſſerted, that the heart, the fountain of all our actions, is polluted.

Secondly, The manner in which it became polluted is here plainly implied, and this will lead us,

Thirdly, To enquire into the means of cleanſing and purifying it.

Firſt, Our bleſſed Lord here declares, that the heart, the fountain of all thought and motion, is polluted. In its natural ſtate it is entirely impure. It is the unclean reſidence of the fouleſt ſpirits, even of murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, and blaſphemy. Theſe are they which by nature dwell in the heart and defile the man: for corrupt nature is always diſpoſed to receive ſome one or all of theſe polluted tempers, as temptation ſhall offer. The propenſity to them is univerſal. Our church has accurately deſcribed this point in her ninth article.

" Original ſin is the fault and corruption of " the nature of every man, that naturally is en-

" gendered

" gendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby " man is very far gone from original righteouſ- " neſs, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, " ſo that the fleſh luſteth always contrary to the " ſpirit, and therefore in every perſon born into " the world it deſerved God's wrath and dam- " nation."

This was the opinion of our reformers, and if you find any difficulty in giving your aſſent to it, the arguments upon which they built it will, I hope, ſatisfy you perfectly. The expreſs teſtimony of the Creator of the hearts of all men, and the experience of thinking men from the beginning of the world to this day, were the chief authorities upon which they grounded their opinion. The whole ſcripture ſuppoſes man to be in a ſtate of corruption, and ſeveral paſſages expreſs the univerſality of this corruption. It is thus delivered, Gen. vi. 5. in the cleareſt terms. " And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man " was great in the earth, and that every imagi- " nation of the thoughts of his heart was only " evil continually." Man does not here ſignify any one man, or race of men, but mankind, the whole human nature, which is ſaid to be ſo polluted with original wickedneſs, that every imagination, not one excepted, of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and continually too. What a fountain then of deadly poiſon is the human heart, ſince all the ſtreams which flow from it are evil,

and continually evil? The univerſal ſpreading of this malignant infection could not be expreſſed in ſtronger words, than to declare, that there was not one imagination in the heart, but what was evil, and always evil. Such is man in his natural ſtate: And might not then the apoſtle truly ſay of it, Eph. ii. 3. "We are all by na- "ture the children of wrath even as others: "for the ſcripture hath concluded all (men, both "Jews and Gentiles) under ſin."

This is the ſcripture account of the heart of the natural man, and experience confirms it. Men are in fact ſuch as the ſcripture deſcribes them, a race of fallen corrupt beings. We find none of them upright and perfect, no not one. That moral rectitude of nature, which ſome metaphyſical divines dream of, has no exiſtence among the ſons of Adam. Heathen writers as well as Chriſtian prove it to be but a dream: for of the corruption of nature they all complain, and give us melancholy proofs of the prevalency of the vices mentioned in the text in every country and in every age. In the preſent age we ſee and feel them: they are grown to ſuch an enormous height at preſent, that they are become a reproach to our religion, and a diſhonour to our laws. Not a day paſſes, but we hear of ſome robbery, or murder, or adultery, &c. and the fountain from whence they all ſpring is the heart. And can the heart then be

clean

clean by nature, and yet ſend forth ſuch polluted ſtreams? Certainly the ſame ſpring cannot ſend forth ſweet water and bitter? That, which ſends forth nothing but corruption, muſt be corrupt in its very origin. The peccant matter muſt lie at the fountain head, and how rank and venomous it is we can have no doubt, if we will but open our eyes, and ſurvey that deluge of wickedneſs, which now covers the face of the earth.

It is certain then that the heart of man is by nature polluted. Scripture and ſad experience forbid us to doubt of it; and yet againſt the evidence of theſe authorities there are ſome men, who call it in queſtion, and who think they ſhew their ſuperior reaſon by believing neither God, nor their own ſenſes. What God declares to them they cannot but ſee is a matter of fact, and yet becauſe they find ſome difficulty in accounting for the manner in which the heart became ſo polluted, they would therefore ſtrangely infer, that it is not polluted at all. This is a very abſurd conduct, but it is common to all unbelievers, and therefore it is neceſſary to ſpeak to the

Second particular, wherein it was propoſed to conſider the manner, in which the human heart became thus polluted. None of the ancient philoſophers, nor none of the modern reaſoners have given us any ſatisfactory account upon this head. The origin of evil is a ſubject, which has been

been always debated in the ſchools of the infidels, and they have not yet produced any ſolution, which their own advocates are agreed to defend. How evil came into the heart is, upon the plan of their natural and metaphyſical religion, abſolutely unaccountable. And this is a good preſumptive proof in favour of the ſcripture account: for the heart is certainly polluted, and the greateſt men among the ancient philoſophers and the modern unbelievers have been able to offer nothing ſatisfactory, neither to themſelves nor others, concerning the manner of its pollution. But the ſcripture accounts for it thus in a plain intelligible way.

God created all things at firſt in a perfect ſtate. When he had finiſhed his works, he took a ſurvey of them, and pronounced them all to be very good. There was no pain in the natural, and no evil in the ſpiritual world. Man was innocent. His heart was right with God. The thoughts of it were clean and pure altogether. He knew no guilt; he had no fear; and therefore he was happy.

The creature, who firſt introduced evil into the works of God, was the devil: for thus ſays our bleſſed Saviour, "The devil was a murderer "from the beginning, and a liar, and the father "of it," John viii. 44. In the beginning he murdered our firſt parents, by ſeducing them into that ſin, which ſubjected their bodies to death, and

and both their bodies and ſouls to eternal condemnation. And he was the father of lies as well as of murder: for all was truth and innocence, until he offered the firſt lying ſuggeſtion to the heart, and baſely inſinuated, that God had maliciouſly forbidden our firſt parents the uſe of the tree of knowledge. To this inſinuation they hearkened, they ſuffered it to make an impreſſion upon their hearts, and diſbelieving what their gracious Creator and heavenly Father had revealed to them, they built their faith on the words of the lying ſpirit, and acted accordingly. Thus he deceived them, and in them all their poſterity: for St. John, ſpeaking of the great dragon, ſays, "This is that old ſerpent called the devil and "ſatan, which deceiveth the whole world." Rev. xii. 9.

The conſequence of our firſt parents being deceived by his lying inſinuations was the loſs of their innocence and happineſs. With their innocence they loſt the grace and preſence of God: "For he is of purer eyes than to behold "the leaſt iniquity," and after his divine grace and preſence were withdrawn, the heart was left to itſelf, and to its own natural workings, which under the tempter's management could produce nothing but murders, adulteries, thefts, &c. which are the corrupt fruits of a corrupt heart. And into whatever heart the divine grace is not returned, the ſame corruptions ſtill

remain, and we ſee the effects of them ſtill breaking out in the ſame abominable vices: for the heart of the natural man is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked—ſo wicked, that ſin is engraven upon it with a character, which no human art or power can eraſe. "The ſin of "Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with "the point of a diamond; it is graven upon "the table of their heart." Jer. xvii. 1. And what hand can come at theſe impreſſions, which are cut ſo deep as to be incorporated into the very ſubſtance of the heart? What power can reach and deface them, but his alone, whoſe prerogative it is to ſearch the heart and the reins?

This is the ſcripture account. And as it is moſt plain and rational, to which what can unbelievers object? They have nothing to ſubſtitute inſtead of this; and they can urge nothing againſt it, except they enquire, Why God ſhould ſuffer man to fall, if he foreſaw that it would be attended with ſuch dreadful conſequences. But this is only aſking, Why he made man a free agent? For if he was free, he muſt have a capacity to make a wrong, as well as a right uſe of his free will, and therefore he could not be placed in a ſtate falling from which was impoſſible. That the firſt man was created with free will we have a moſt melancholy demonſtration, the effects of which are ſtill ſeen and felt all over the

the world, and that he had every aſſiſtance which could enable him to make a right uſe of his free will, the ſcripture gives us a full account: but he abuſed it. Upon which the aſſiſtance before given was withdrawn, and after this aſſiſtance was taken out of the heart, there was nothing left in it but its own fleſhly deſires and inclinations, and when theſe were ſpirited up by the lying ſuggeſtion of the infernal tempter, what could come out of ſuch an heart, but murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, with all the other polluted works of the fleſh and the devil.

Upon this ſtate of the caſe it appears, that man loſt by the fall the two chief bleſſings of his ſpiritual life, namely, the image of God, and the ſpirit of God. Sin blotted out the image of God, in which man was at firſt created, and the ſcripture expreſsly declares, that we were afterwards born in the image of our father Adam with all his worldly deſires, and corrupt inclinations, Gen. v. 3. And theſe the ſacred writers generally term The fleſh, ſignifying by this word all the carnal appetites which govern man ſince the fall, and of which the apoſtle declares, "That they who are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe "God." Rom. viii. 8. Becauſe while they are governed by the fleſh, and not by the ſpirit, they continue in the image of the earthly Adam, and in the likeneſs of his fallen nature: by which

they are alſo alienated from the ſpirit of God. The divine and holy Spirit left the polluted temple of the heart, after ſin had prophaned it. He is of purer eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity, and therefore he could not dwell in an impure heart; and upon his retiring, it became alienated from the life of God, being now a perfect ſtranger to all the graces of that ſpiritual life, which innocent man had always, and liberally enjoyed. And after the divine image was thus extinguiſhed, and the divine ſpirit was gone, which the ſcripture expreſsly declares were the two fatal effects of the fall, then the heart of man was under the dominion of its own fleſhly deſires, and was ready to commit any of the abominable deeds of the fleſh, whenever opportunity ſhould offer, and inclination invite, and the devil ſtrongly ſolicit to the commiſſion of them.

Now every man who comes into the world is by nature in this ſtate, and he will continue in it, until he finds the miſery of it: until the ſenſe of his diſtreſs force him to cry out, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? This conviction of our miſery is the firſt ſtep towards a deliverance from it. So ſoon as we find ourſelves ſick, we are half cured: for if we can but bring ourſelves to go with humility and prayer to the almighty phyſician, he has promiſed to give us freely every thing proper for our relief. He is both able and willing

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to cleanſe the fountain of the heart from all its corruptions, which is the .

Third and laſt enquiry I was to make: for though man be miſerable in himſelf, yet God hath not left him without remedy. The great deſign of chriſtianity is to reſtore man to the ſtate from whence he fell, and by the ſame ſteps, through which he fell. Sin put an entire ſtop to the divine grace and influence, which are as neceſſary to the ſoul as breath is to the body, and when they were withdrawn, the ſinner then loſt the image of God, and the ſpirit of God: through the merits of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the divine grace and influence are offered to us again, and whoever ſeeks them by humility and prayer, until he receive them, is then made a partaker of the ſpirit of God, who firſt makes the heart faithful and penitent, and afterwards juſtifies it by the blood of Chriſt, and ſanctifies it by forming in it all the ſweet and holy tempers of the bleſſed Jeſus, in which the image of God now conſiſts. And when the heart is thus created anew and regenerated, then is that great change perfected, of which the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 Cor. xv. "As we have borne the image of the firſt Adam, "who is of the earth, in like manner ſhall we "bear the image of the ſecond Adam, who is "the Lord from heaven." And whoever is renewed after the image of this ſecond Adam, he has a clean and a pure heart, and a ſweet foun-

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tain might as ſoon ſend forth poiſonous water, as this ſanctified heart can produce murder, adultery, fornication, or any of the filthy works of the fleſh.

This is the ſcripture account of the means of cleanſing the heart. The great purifier is Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe blood has infinite merit to waſh away the pollutions of the whole world. The holy ſpirit is the gracious agent, who purifies the heart with this all-meritorious blood. It is his office to take out by the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus all the guilt of our corrupt nature, and " to create in us a new heart and a right ſpirit," ---the new heart bears the image of our merciful Saviour, and the right ſpirit is no longer alienated from the life of God, but lives in holy communion and fellowſhip with the holy Spirit. and thus the ſinner becomes a new man and a new creature. His ſoul is endued with a new ſet of faculties and tempers entirely chriſtian, and his heart, which was formerly the habitation of the fouleſt vices, of murder, adultery, fornication, &c. is now conſecrated, and made an holy temple for the living God.

This is the only method, which the ſcripture has taught us, of cleanſing the heart from thoſe worldly and carnal tempers, with which it is by nature infected. If you refuſe to believe the ſcripture, try any other method; but be aſſured you muſt come to this at laſt. Experience will bring you to

to it. You will find, God grant you may find it in time, that nothing is able to purify the heart, but the blood of the Lamb of God, and that nothing is able to apply it to the heart, but the eternal Spirit. You will be the more fully convinced of this the more you try other things: ſee firſt how far the boaſted religion of nature, and its moral rectitude, and the fitneſs of things, and ſuch like metaphyſical non-entities, can reform the heart---make your experiments upon the liberal arts and ſciences---go through them one after another---ſtudy books and men---try every thing that wit can invent or money purchaſe, and withhold nothing from your ſoul of all its deſires---and then ſit down, and carefully and impartially examine your own heart, and judge, how far all theſe worldly purſuits and attainments have reformed it. And what is the iſſue? Are you really better? Do you find your heart more free from corruption than it was when you firſt ſet out? You will not, you cannot aſſert it: becauſe reaſon and matter of fact are againſt you; they demonſtrate, that our worldly tempers muſt be fed and encouraged by theſe worldly purſuits and attainments; for it is a glaring contradiction to ſuppoſe, that we can increaſe our ſpirituals, by laying out all our time and pains upon temporals. Be therefore aſſured that the more you try theſe worldly things, the worſe you will be; and the longer you try them, the more

more difficult will you find it to be ſet right. They have no virtue to take one ſingle vice out of the heart, but as they fall in with our corrupt inclinations, they muſt encourage and ſtrengthen every vice, which is in the heart. If you try all the powers upon earth, you will find by experience, that the heart is out of their reach, and at laſt, if ever you ſee the face of God with joy, you muſt conclude, that there is nothing but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and the operation of his good Spirit, which is able to cleanſe your polluted hearts, and to renew a right ſpirit within you.

Thus it is abundantly evident from experience, that nothing can purify and take away the natural pollutions of the heart, but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt ſprinkled upon it by the holy Spirit. This is the only goſpel method. And it is able to purify by faith and take away all theſe pollutions, which nothing elſe can: for its power is alſo abundantly evident from experience. It has been found effectual, after all other methods have failed. It has been tried ever ſince ſin firſt entered into the world, and has ever ſucceeded. And this ſingle circumſtance ſeems ſufficient to recommend it to the minds of all ſerious perſons, and to determine them to receive it as the ſovereign remedy of their natural corruptions. We have in the firſt ages after Chriſt a particular account of the great change made in men's hearts upon

upon their embracing the goſpel. And theſe accounts are ſo well atteſted, that if the ſtrongeſt hiſtorical evidence can gain your aſſent, they will appear to you full and deciſive. I remember to have ſeen a paſſage in Lactantius, where in his apology for the Chriſtians of his time, he has theſe words, "Give me a man (ſays he to "the heathens) who is paſſionate, malicious, "headſtrong, with a few goſpel precepts, I will "render him as meek as a lamb. Give me one "who is covetous, I will ſoon perſuade him to "be liberal and charitable. Give me one "who dreads afflictions and death, I will make "him run and court martyrdom. Give me an "unclean, intemperate, unjuſt, cruel, ſinful "wretch, I will, by the knowledge of Chriſt, "and by the influence of his laws, render him "chaſte, ſober, merciful, innocent, and holy." Lactantius had good reaſon for what he here aſſerts: he had ſeen the goſpel of Chriſt take theſe vices out of men's hearts, and we have ſeen the ſame happy effects of it in our days; not indeed in ſo great a number, but, God be praiſed for it, we have enow to demonſtrate to any unbeliever, that the ſame goſpel has ſtill the ſame power. You do not ſee ſo much of its power, becauſe you do not hear ſo much of the goſpel. But wherever the pure goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt is preached, and men receive it with faith, there experience daily confirms what Lactantius long

long ago obſerved. You ſtill ſee it work the ſame real change in men's tempers, which cannot ariſe from any heat of fancy, or flight of enthuſiaſm, or ſudden rapture of devotion, becauſe it is a ſober, regular, thorough change, that reforms the heart, and all its affections, and influences the whole behaviour, rendering a man confident and uniform throughout the whole courſe of his future life. That ſuch changes are wrought at this day is an undoubted matter of fact. Sinners, and great ſinners too, are brought to ſee the error of their ways, to forſake their wicked courſes, to lead a new life, to follow the commandments of God, and to walk from henceforth in his holy ways. This is an entire, a total change. When a ſinner becomes a Chriſtian, he is abſolutely a new creature and a new man, inſomuch that you may truly ſay of him, "old "things are paſſed away, behold, all things are "become new:" for he neither thinks, ſpeaks, nor acts, as he uſed to do. He has a new ſet of ſenſes and faculties. He neither ſees things in the ſame light he did before, nor hears after the ſame manner. What formerly pleaſed him, now diſpleaſes. The very end of all his purſuits is changed, and his happineſs is placed on a different object. We ſee this perfect change produced every day, when the goſpel enters into any man's heart. As it takes poſſeſſion, the corrupt paſſions retire. The holy Spirit purifies

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the fountain, and then all the ſtreams run pure. It is evident, that he has given the heart a new nature, becauſe what proceeds from it is not influenced by the natural man. All is renewed. The murderer is humane and loving, the fornicator and adulterer are chaſte, the thief is honeſt, the falſe-witneſs true, the blaſphemer a chriſtian. Such is the glorious change, which the holy Spirit makes when he ſprinkles the heart with the all-purifying blood of the Lamb of God.

And now we have diſcovered the cauſe of the evil, and its remedy. The heart of every man we find to be by nature corrupt, deſtitute entirely of divine grace, and diſpoſed as temptation ſhall offer to commit any wickedneſs: for from this fruitful fountain, from the heart of the natural man, proceed murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, perjuries, and blaſphemies. And nothing but the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus can dry up this fountain of ſin, and nothing can carry the virtue of it to the heart but an almighty ſpirit. Human laws, which are the only expedient lately attempted, cannot come at the head and ſource of this corrupt fountain. It lies too deep. Their power cannot reach it, and much leſs purify it. An act of parliament can only regulate the outward behaviour. It can take no cognizance of a crime, until it break out into ſome overt act, and therefore it can have

have no influence over the heart. If murder, adultery, robbery, &c. be in the heart, there all ſtatute laws leave them; and the inclination only waits for a fair opportunity, which it will always embrace, whenever there is a proſpect of eſcaping the laſh of the law. Thus no ſin is hereby prevented. Only the commiſſion of it is rendered more private, and the heart is put upon inventing ſchemes, how it may gratify itſelf in its pleaſures, without incurring the pains and penalties, which the law threatens to inflict. By this means the corruption that ſeems to be diminiſhed in the channels, gathers and increaſes at the fountain-head, where the more it is ſtopt, the more it ferments and pollutes itſelf. Since this is the caſe, what reformation can we expect from the interpoſition of human authority? Suppoſing the legiſlature ſhould follow his majeſty's gracious inſtructions from the throne, and try to find out ſome new laws for putting a ſtop to robberies and murders, yet experience would ſoon prove them to be ineffectual. All the human laws, which ever were made, or ever will be made, cannot reform one ſingle perſon, becauſe they cannot reach the heart. Goſpel and not law ſhould be here employed. The goſpel can take ſin out of the heart, but the law can only make the commiſſion of it more private. The clergy therefore ſhould be called upon, and not the magiſtrate. This is under God, the peculiar

peculiar buſineſs of the miniſters of the goſpel, and it is I fear owing to their great neglect of their duty, that robberies and murder are become ſo common. Our people grow more corrupt in their morals, not for want of good ſtatute laws, but for want of good goſpel miniſters. For it is certain, that the goſpel, and nothing elſe, can take murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, &c. out of the heart, and it is as certain, that the goſpel has taken them out of the heart, wherever it has been properly received: and therefore either in the manner of applying the goſpel, or in not applying at all, there is a great failing ſomewhere or other among us. God Almighty grant, that they who are guilty may ſee their error, and may have grace to repent and amend.

And now let me intreat you, my brethren, to pray that theſe truths may make a proper impreſſion upon your minds. You have heard me labour this point much of late. It appears to me to be the moſt important in chriſtianity, and therefore in ſeveral diſcourſes I have been endeavouring to give you a juſt ſenſe of your ſtate and condition by nature. What ſucceſs they may have met with depends upon God, whoſe bleſſing upon them I do moſt ſincerely implore. All our preaching can do nothing to you hearts without his grace, and I beſeech him that, out of the riches of his infinite love to ſinners, through

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, he would be pleaſed to let you ſee your own hearts: for until you behold that defilement and corruption, in which the heart of every man lies by nature, you will ſee but little neceſſity for a Saviour. And this divine grace I hope he will now ſend into all our hearts, that you may be diſpoſed to receive favourably, and to profit by, two ſhort remarks, with which I ſhall apply the doctrine, firſt, to them who do not believe it, then to them who have given their free aſſent.

If any of you do not believe the doctrine, you are in a very dangerous ſituation, becauſe you are on the very brink of deſtruction, and yet do not ſee your danger. Can you think your heart is not corrupt? This very thought demonſtrates its corruption: for ſinners you certainly are, and all ſin comes from the heart, and can the heart ſend forth a whole life of ſin, and not be ſinful itſelf? This is impoſſible. To believe ſuch an impoſſibility argues a moſt dangerous ſtate of mind. A man does not cheat himſelf more, who fancies himſelf to be in good health, when he has been long ill, and is juſt dying, than he who fancies his heart to be pure, although every thing that flows from it is impure. This is one of the greateſt deluſions of ſin. It lulls the ſinner into a ſtate of ſecurity, and tempts him to believe, that his heart is pure and without ſpot, although it be nothing but corruption and deformity.

mity. Whoever is tempted into this belief does not know himſelf. And if any of you have fallen into this fatal error, I pray God to let you know yourſelves: for you are as yet perfect ſtrangers to your own breaſts. If you were to ſee them naked and open, with all the little lurking places, where ſelf-love and vain-glory conceal your failings, the moment you beheld the horrid ſight, it would force you to cry out, "Jeſus, maſter, have mercy on me." Oh! what a bleſſing would it be, if you could now ſpeak theſe words from your hearts. I hope you will. And may the Lord God of heaven ſhew you, what you really are by nature, and then make you what you ought to be by grace.

To you, who believe the doctrine, I need not uſe many words, becauſe you are convinced, that the heart is a polluted fountain, from whence all vices ſpring, and that nothing can purify it, but the blood of the lamb of God ſprinkled upon it by the Holy Spirit. This is the firm belief of every chriſtian. I hope you know it to be true, both from ſcripture and from experience. You find that the fountain has been cleanſed, becauſe the ſtreams run pure. Your lives and actions ſhew, that God has created a new heart, and has renewed a right ſpirit within you, and it is your whole care and ſtudy to keep this new heart clean and holy. But whenever you find any defilement beginning to ariſe, even in thought, immediately

immediately ſend up your prayers to God. Intreat his grace to keep you from the pollution of ſin, and if you always make him your refuge and ſtrength, conſtantly ſeeking him in the ways of his ordinances, then his Holy Spirit will keep out of your hearts all thoſe corruptions, which defile the man, and your Lord Jeſus will ſo purify you by his infinite merits, that you ſhall be preſented before God the father without ſpot of ſin unto ſalvation. Bleſſed Lord and Saviour carry theſe truths to all our hearts; accompany them, we intreat thee, with thy bleſſing; and keep our hearts pure by thy grace, until thou bring them ſafe unto thy glory. *Amen.*

A

DISCOURSE

ON

THE BENEFIT

WHICH

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

IS OF TO MAN,

IN HIS

JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE;

PREACHED AT

CHRIST-CHURCH, IN NEWGATE-STREET,

On Whitſun-Monday, May 19, 1755,

PURSUANT TO THE

WILL OF MISS ELIZABETH HILL,

LATE OF FALMOUTH, CORNWALL.

The fruit of the ſpirit is in all Goodneſs.—EPH. v. 9.

PREFACE.

THE following diſcourſe was drawn up at the requeſt of Miſs Hill's executor, to whom I am greatly obliged for appointing me to preach on Whitſun-Monday, agreeably to the words of her will, on the benefit which the Holy Spirit of God is of to man in his journey through life: And what I thought myſelf bound in duty to deliver from the pulpit, I have ſince been perſuaded to ſend from the preſs; for although it contains nothing new either in the matter or manner, yet I think it incumbent upon me to bear my public teſtimony to the great doctrine of chriſtianity here inculcated. I am prepared for the reception it will meet with, not only from the monthly reviewers, the avowed enemies of the eſtabliſhed church, and its eſtabliſhed doctrines, but alſo from all mere nominal

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Chriſtians. But let them ridicule it ever ſo much as Hutchinſonian Enthuſiaſm, yet ſince it is expreſsly taught in ſcripture, and maintained in the cleareſt manner by our church, it will give me no concern to be reckoned an Enthuſiaſt, while the ſcripture is on my ſide, or an Hutchinſonian, while the Church of England ſupports me; and if men will call the plain doctrines of ſcripture Enthuſiaſm, and will treat the articles, and homilies, and liturgy of our church as Hutchinſonianiſm, I hope I ſhall live and die a Church of England-Hutchinſonian-Enthuſiaſt.

DISCOURSE

ON THE

HOLY SPIRIT.

EZEK. XXXVI. 25, 26, 27.

Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean; from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols will I cleanſe you. A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of fleſh. And I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.

OUR bleſſed Saviour ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of his apoſtles forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and being aſſembled together with them, he commanded them, that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, ſaith he, ye have heard

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of me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt, not many days hence. And according to his moſt true promiſe, the holy Ghoſt came down as at this time from heaven, with a ſudden great ſound, as it had been a mighty wind, in the likeneſs of fiery tongues, lighting upon the apoſtles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth, giving them both the gifts of divers languages, and alſo boldneſs with fervent zeal, conſtantly to preach the goſpel unto all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkneſs and error, into the clear light and true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt.

This is the ſubject of the preſent feſtival. We are here aſſembled to commemorate the gifts and graces which the holy Spirit beſtowed upon the apoſtles, and to bleſs God for our intereſt in them. The ſame Spirit is ſtill with us, and will abide with us for ever. He is with us, not to bring the world over to the outward profeſſion of chriſtianity; for that is already effected, and the extraordinary powers, which were neceſſary to effect it are ceaſed. Chriſtianity is eſtabliſhed, and outward miracles are no longer needful to be the outward proofs of it. But the holy Spirit has ſtill the ſame inward work to carry on, which he had in the apoſtles time, and it requires the ſame degree of divine and almighty power, although it be not exerted

erted in outward miracles. The mind of every man is by nature in darkneſs and ignorance, blind as to the things of God; this he has to enlighten with ſaving truth. The will and all the affections are depraved, and it is his gracious office to incline and diſpoſe them to comply with the will of God. And after the underſtanding is enlightened, and the heart renewed, we have ſtill no power to walk in the ways of holineſs, without the ſpecial grace of the holy Spirit, whoſe guidance is neceſſary every moment, and for every thought, and word, and work. Theſe are called the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, not as if they were leſs divine, or any thing ſhort of the almighty operations in the apoſtolic age, but becauſe theſe were extraordinary, given for a certain fixed time, to carry on a particular work, but the former were common to all believers, to the apoſtles themſelves as believers, and are to be the ordinary gifts and graces of every chriſtian unto the end of the world. And whoever has received theſe ordinary operations, has in his own heart clear and full teſtimony of the Godhead, and almighty power of the bleſſed Spirit. He wants no outward miracles. This great inward work is to him complete evidence; and he is able to reſt his ſalvation with as full truſt and confidence upon it, as if he had ſeen the apoſtles exert their miraculous gifts and graces.

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of, becauſe it was to purify them from all ſin. " I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye " ſhall be clean, from all your filthineſs and " from all your Idols will I cleanſe you," from all the filthineſs of ſin, and from all the guilt of idolatry I will purify them. Sin polluted all the faculties of the ſoul, and my good Spirit ſhall cleanſe them all. The underſtanding he ſhall purify by removing its natural blindneſs, and by opening their eyes to ſee the error of their ways, that they may be brought to Jeſus Chriſt for ſalvation, and may have their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience with the all purifying blood of the lamb of God, which will juſtify them, and may have grace and power to walk in the ſtatutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, which will ſanctify them; and thus he cleanſes all the faculties: for it follows in the ſecond verſe of the text, " A new heart alſo will I " give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within " you, and I will take away the ſtony heart out " of your fleſh, and I will give you an heart of " fleſh." The cleanſing of the heart is the greateſt work of divine grace, becauſe there is in every ſinner hardneſs, and an impenitent heart, which no human power can ſoften. The ſcripture ſpeaks of it in the ſtrongeſt expreſſions, " The ſin of Judah is written with a pen of " iron, and with the point of a diamond, it is " graven upon the table of their heart;" and

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what power is able to eraſe this deep engraving, except the almighty God, who declares, "I "will give you a new heart," renewed in all its faculties, "and a new ſpirit will I put within "you," endued with new appetites and new affections, "and I will take away the ſtony heart," the refreſhing ſtreams of my grace ſhall ſoften the old hardened heart of ſin, which would take no good impreſſion, "and I will give you an "heart of fleſh," ſoft and pliable, yielding to the motions of my grace, and willing to have the law engraved by the Spirit of the living God upon the fleſhly tables of the heart. And after the heart and the affections are thus renewed, and diſpoſed to love the will of God, the Holy Spirit was ſtill to proceed, and to go on in the work of ſactification, in which his grace is abſolutely neceſſary. Even after the ſtony heart is taken out, we ſtill want his guidance, and whenever he leaves us to ourſelves, we cannot take one ſtep in our journey towards heaven. And therefore God promiſes to them, who had a new heart, "that he would put his Spirit within "them, and cauſe them to walk in his ſtatutes." His Spirit ſhould be their guide, both to lead them into the way of God's commandments, and to give them ſtrength and power to walk in theſe ways ſteadily unto the end: for the light of nature could never direct ſinners into the paths of God's commandments, nor could the beſt natural

tural abilities go forward in them, unleſs God ſhould put his Spirit within us, and give us power to walk in his ſtatutes. We want his ſupport every ſtep we take throughout the whole work of ſanctification. If we go forward, he is the cauſe. He gives us both the will and the power; for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. It is the Spirit of God within us, who cauſes us to walk in his ſtatutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them.

And thus the prophet has taught us of what benefit the holy Spirit is to man during his journey through this life. We cannot ſo much as ſet out upon our journey to heaven, until he cleanſe all the faculties, by removing the blindneſs of the underſtanding, and the depravity of the will and affections. It is his office to give us a new heart and a new ſpirit, diſpoſed to receive impreſſions of the divine law, and then to endue it with power to walk in the ſtatutes of God, and to keep his judgments, and to do them; ſo that every ſtep we take from the firſt moment we ſet out, until we happily arrive at the end of our journey, is directed and ſupported by the holy Spirit of God. This is the prophet's doctrine, which I come

Secondly, To apply to your ſpiritual uſe and benefit. And if we make a right uſe of it, we muſt not only endeavour to be convinced of its truth,

truth, but alſo to find the power of it operating upon our lives and converſations; for it would be to no purpoſe to believe, that the holy Spirit is the author and finiſher of the whole work of grace, if this belief ſhould reſt unoperative in the head, and never diſpoſe us to ſeek the experience of it in the heart, and in the reſt of the faculties. Since his grace is to cleanſe us from all the pollutions of ſin, and to create in us a new heart, and to renew a right ſpirit within us, and to give us power to walk in the way of God's commandments, let us not hear theſe truths as mere ſpeculative points, but let us ſuffer the conviction of them to operate in our lives, and to carry us to ſeek our own intereſt in them. And I hope the bleſſed Spirit will render profitable to theſe good purpoſes what I have to offer concerning the uſefulneſs of his guidance throughout the journey of life.

Sin polluted the whole man, and made every part and power unclean and abominable altogether, and the prophet aſcribes to the holy Spirit the whole work of cleanſing the ſoul. His grace is neceſſary to purify every faculty. He begins with removing the darkneſs of the underſtanding, and enlightening it with all-ſaving truth, of which by nature we are ignorant. Sin rendered us incapable of ſeeing ſpiritual objects. It did not entirely deſtroy the organ of ſight, but it entirely ſtopped all communion between it, and

and the fountain of light, and brought the ſoul into ſuch a ſtate as the body would be in, if the ſun was blotted out of heaven, and the moon and ſtars were no more to reflect their enlivening rays upon the earth. This would be a moſt uncomfortable and heavy night, in which although the bodily organ of ſight remained, yet theſe outward objects would be as inviſible, as if the organ was quite deſtroyed. And ſin produced the ſame effects in the ſpiritual world. Every ſon of Adam is in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, until the holy Spirit of God enlighten the eyes of the underſtanding. St. Paul's account of the Gentiles is this (Eph. iv. 18.) " they had the " underſtanding darkened, being alienated from " the life of God through the ignorance that is " in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their " heart." Sin darkened the underſtanding and alienated them from the life of God, by ſeparating them from that divine light, which is the principle of their ſpiritual life, and therefore they lived no longer unto God, but were cut off from all intercourſe and communion with him. In this ſtate of darkneſs and blindneſs we all continue, entirely ignorant of the things of God, until his good Spirit manifeſt them unto us. The natural underſtanding in its higheſt refinement cannot diſcover them; " for the natural " man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of " God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, nei-

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" ther can he know them, becauſe they are ſpi-
" ritually diſcerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) The natural man cannot receive ſpiritual things. God muſt reveal them unto him by his Spirit, before he can have the leaſt diſcernment of them, even what is revealed concerning them in ſcripture cannot be diſcerned, until the holy Spirit open the eyes to behold it. And under the ſenſe of this truth the prophet thus intreats God. " Open
" thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous
" things out of thy law," Pſalm cxix. 18. to open the eyes to behold them was the work of God. And again he prays, " Give me under-
" ſtanding" (it was the gift of God) " that I
" may learn thy commandments. I am thy ſer-
" vant, give me underſtanding, that I may know
" thy teſtimonies," Pſalm cxix. 73, 125. And to the ſame effect St. Paul prays for his Epheſians, that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Father of glory would give unto them the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, " that the eyes of their underſtanding might be
" enlightened." This was the work of God. He was to give unto them the Spirit, and the Spirit was to give them wiſdom, and to reveal the knowledge of God to them, by which means the eyes of their underſtanding would be enlightened.

This is the doctrine of ſcripture; and I may confirm it from an authority, which I eſteem next to

to the word of God, and that is the ſenſe of our church upon this point. In the collect for the 5th Sunday after Eaſter ſhe teaches us to pray, "O Lord, from whom all good things do come; "grant to us thy humble ſervants, that by thy "holy inſpiration we may think thoſe things "that be good, &c." We cannot ſo much as think a good thought, unleſs we have the holy inſpiration of God: and again on the 9th Sunday after Trinity we pray, "Grant to us, Lord, we "beſeech thee, the ſpirit to think and do always "ſuch things as be rightful, that we who can- "not do any thing that is good without thee, "may by thee be enabled to live according to "thy will, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." To the ſame purpoſe we read in the third part of the homily for Rogation week. "Let us meekly "call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghoſt, "to inſpire us with his preſence, that we may "be able to hear the goodneſs of God to our "ſalvation. For without his lively inſpiration "can we not ſo much as ſpeak the name of the "mediator. No man can ſay, that Jeſus is the "Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt. Much leſs "ſhould we be able to underſtand theſe great "myſteries, that be opened to us by Chriſt. "For we have received, ſaith St. Paul, not the "ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit which is of "God, for this purpoſe, that we may know the "things which are freely given to us of God.

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" In the power of the Holy Ghoſt reſteth all abi-
" lity to know God and to pleaſe him. It is he
" that purifieth the mind by his ſecret working.
" He enlighteneth the heart to eoneeive worthy
" thoughts of Almighty God." Theſe authorities are clear. They expreſly deelare, that we cannot think ſueh things as be rightful without the holy inſpiration of the Spirit of God. Theſe are the ſentiments of ſeripture, and of the Chureh of England, coneerning the firſt ſtep we are to take in our ehriſtian courſe.

By removing the darkneſs of the natural underſtanding, and by enlightening it with allſaving truth, the holy Spirit enables us to ſee the way to heaven, the next ſtep is to diſpoſe the will to walk in it: for after we ſee the right way, yet we have no deſire to walk in it, until he renew the heart. It is the work of his grace to incline the will, and to diſpoſe it aright, that it may eonſent to the will of God: for our wills are by nature corrupt. The will of the fleſh is oppoſite to the will of God; and our affections are ſo depraved, that they ehooſe only evil, and continually. " And God ſaw that the wieked-
" neſs of man was great in the earth, and that
" every imagination of the thoughts of his heart
" was only evil eontinually." Gen. vi. 5. And this continually evil heart is alſo obdurately evil. It is ſtóny and rocky, harder than adamant. All the powers in nature eannot ſoften it. Sin has rendered it incapable of any good impreſſion,

unleſs it be made by an almighty arm. He alone who created the heart can make it relent before him. To ſoften an hardened heart is as great a work as to create a world, and therefore the prophet prays, "create in me a clean heart, "O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me." To create, is to make a thing out of nothing, and the ſame creative power which brought the heavens and the earth out of nothing is neceſſary to create in the ſinner a clean heart: for to caſt him in a new mould, and to make him a new man, is harder than to make him a man at firſt; becauſe nothing oppoſed his creation. God ſpake, and it was done. But the heart, which was conceived in ſin, has lived in ſin, and has loved ſin, and placed all its affections upon it, has an utter averſion to this new creation. And what power is able to take the love of ſin out of the heart, and to render it willing to be made pure and holy? Say, who is equal to this great work? Certainly, no created power. He alone can do it, who turneth the hard rock into a ſtanding water, and the flint ſtone into a ſpringing well. He can do it, and he has promiſed, "I will give you a new heart, and a new ſpirit "will I put within you, and I will take away "your ſtony heart, and I will give you an heart "of fleſh, and I will put my Spirit within you." My Spirit ſhall work this great change. He ſhall take the hard ſtony heart out of you, which is altogether ſinful, and ſhall enable you to delight in the

the law of God in the inner man. And thus he renews the heart, " for we are ſaved by the " waſhing of regeneration, and renewing the " Holy Ghoſt." (Titus iii. 5.) And

This is the language of our church. On Chriſtmas day we uſe theſe words, " Almighty " God—grant that we being regenerate, and " made thy children by adoption and grace, may " daily be renewed by thy holy Spirit, &c." And again on the 19th Sunday after Trinity we pray. " O God, foraſmuch as without thee we " are not able to pleaſe thee; mercifully grant, " that thy holy ſpirit may in all things direct " and rule our hearts, through Jeſus Chriſt our " Lord." We are taught the reaſon for offering up theſe petitions in the 10th article of free-will.

" The condition of man after the fall of " Adam is ſuch, that he cannot turn and pre- " pare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength " and good works to faith and calling upon " God: wherefore we have no power to do " good works pleaſant and acceptable to God, " without the grace of God by Chriſt preventing " us, that we may have a good-will, and work- " ing with us when we have that good-will." We have loſt by the fall the power of turning and preparing our hearts to any religious exerciſe, and we have not even the good-will, much leſs the power to do any one good work, until the grace of God go before and diſpoſe the will, and afterwards work with us, when we have

that good will; from whence it is evident, that the will and the affections muſt be renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, before there can be any good in fallen man; agreeably to what we read (Prov. xvi. 1.) "that the preparations of the heart in "man are from the Lord."

From theſe authorities of ſcripture, and of our own church, it muſt be evident to every unprejudiced perſon, that the heart is by nature inclined to evil, hard and ſtony, and unwilling to receive any good impreſſions, and no power can ſoften it but an almighty Spirit, whoſe grace alone is able to renew it after the image of him that created it.

And after the underſtanding is enlightened, and the will and affections renewed, we ſtill want grace every moment to enable us to go on in the ways of holineſs. After we have received juſtifying grace, we continually ſtand in need of the ſanctifying grace of the holy Spirit. We cannot take one ſtep without his aſſiſtance: for it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do. We have no power nor might in ourſelves, but all our ſufficiency is of God. In our ſpiritual courſe his grace is as neceſſary, as breathing is to the body. There is but one word in ſcripture for the air which the body breaths, and for that grace which is the breath of our ſpiritual life; and if you cannot move, much leſs run a race, without breath, how then can you run through your chriſtian courſe without grace? You

You muſt breathe the air in at every ſtep, and you muſt have grace breathed into you every ſtep you take in your way to heaven. And therefore when our bleſſed Lord breathed upon the apoſtles, he at the ſame time explained the meaning of what he did by ſaying, "receive ye "the Holy Ghoſt," whoſe gracious office it is to act upon the ſoul, as breath does upon the body: and hence it is called inſpiration, which ſignifies breathing in, and ſince this inſpiration is as neceſſary to our ſpiritual life, as breath is to our animal life, is it not from hence certain, that we cannot take one ſtep in the ways of holineſs, unleſs the inſpiration of the Almighty enable us to proceed?

And theſe are the ſentiments of the word of God. "O Lord, I know, ſays Jeremiah (x. "23.) that the way of man is not in himſelf, it "is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps." The Pſalmiſt acknowledges it, for he prays, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my "footſteps ſlip not. Incline my heart unto thy "teſtimonies, and make me to go in the path of "thy commandments." And again he ſays, "I "will run the way of thy commandments, when "thou ſhalt enlarge my heart," when thou ſhalt give it freedom and liberty, that it may walk with pleaſure in thoſe paths which are to the natural man grievous. And the New Teſtament opens and explains theſe expreſſions of the old, by aſſuring us, that believers "walk in the ſpi-

"rit,

" rit, and are led by the ſpirit," and are ſtrengthened by the ſpirit in the inner man, " who gives " them grace to ſerve God acceptably: for the " fruit of the ſpirit is in all goodneſs, and righte- " ouſneſs, and truth, proving what is acceptable " unto the Lord." And to enable us to produce theſe fruits, the comforter is to be with us for ever. He is to guide and direct our lives, and to govern our converſations. He will never leave us, nor forſake us, but will ſupport us with his grace every moment. And this his continual aſſiſtance our church prays for in theſe words: " O God, foraſmuch as without thee we " are not able to pleaſe thee, mercifully grant " that thy holy ſpirit may in ALL things direct " and rule our hearts." (9th Sunday after Trinity.) And again, " O Lord — grant that by " thy holy inſpiration we may think thoſe things " that be good, and by thy merciful guidance " may perform the ſame." (5th Sunday after Eaſter.) From whence it is evident, that the holy Spirit is our guide through the journey of life. The whole work of ſanctification is his. He cleanſes the heart, purifies it, fills it full of faith and hope and love, and enriches it with all the ſweet and heavenly tempers of the bleſſed Jeſus. He ſanctifies every viſitation to God's people; if it be proſperous, he keeps them humble; if it be adverſe, he arms them with patience, and thus he makes all things work together for their good. God grant you may all find

find theſe truths verified by your own experience: for truths they are, and you cannot deny them. If you believe the word of God, and if you pay any regard to the doctrines of our church, you muſt confeſs, that the holy Spirit is the author and finiſher of our happy journey through life. Sinful fallen man has no light to direct him in the way, until the holy Spirit remove the darkneſs of the underſtanding, and reveal every ſaving truth, and then he ſees the paths which lead to everlaſting joy. This is the firſt ſtep. But when he ſees them, he has no will to walk in them. His heart is ſet againſt them, it is hard and ſtony, and inflexibly evil. The holy ſpirit alone has power to work upon it, and to melt it down into a ſoft tender heart, which will freely yield to have the law of God engraven upon it. And after we have taken this ſtep, after we have ſeen the right road in which our journey lies, and are diſpoſed to walk in it, yet we want power to ſucceed ſucceſsfully. Sin made us weak and infirm, and inbred corruption keeps us ſo, and therefore the ſame good Spirit, that worketh all in all, muſt go along with us every ſtep to ſtrengthen our weakneſs, and ſupport us every moment to help our infirmities. We are not ſufficient for theſe things of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God.

And ſince the evidence of this doctrine is clear and full, and not to be denied by any perſon, who allows the authority of ſcripture, I may

may here reſt the matter at preſent, and enquire what effect your aſſent to it has produced. Have you deſired to experience the truth of it? Or have you found the comfort of it in your ſouls? Do you remember when the Holy Spirit opened your eyes, and brought you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light? Is your will reconciled to the will of God? And are you able to conform your lives and converſations to it? If you are in this happy ſtate, and if before God the ſearcher of hearts, you can declare that he has done theſe wonders for your ſalvation, O be thankful unto him, and live a life of praiſe and gratitude. May the Holy Spirit direct every thought, and word, and work, to the honour and glory of Jeſus Chriſt your Saviour and your God. But

If you call yourſelves chriſtians, and yet know nothing of thoſe great changes, which the Holy Spirit muſt work in your hearts before you are chriſtians indeed, O conſider in what a dangerous ſtate you live. If God be true, your ſouls are in darkneſs, your hearts in ſin, and all your faculties under the power of ſatan, and until you be enlightened and converted, have a new heart, and a new nature, you are children of wrath, and if you die in this ſtate, you are loſt and ruined to all eternity. If ever you ſee the face of God with joy, you muſt be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind. You muſt be made juſt and holy. All this muſt be done. You muſt experience

rience it, and you will know it as certainly as you know any truth, when the Holy Spirit bears teſtimony with your ſpirits, that you are the children of God.

But you have been told, that this doctrine is enthuſiaſm. It is ſo, in the opinion of the world, and it ever was, and ever will be. It muſt be enthuſiaſm to the natural man to talk of the inward working of the Holy Spirit; for he diſcerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, becauſe he has no ſpiritual diſcernment. To a man who never found himſelf in darkneſs, never felt the hardneſs of his heart, never mourned over his inability to walk in the ways of holineſs, it muſt appear like viſion and madneſs to talk of being enlightened, and renewed, and ſtrengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit. And indeed this doctrine is become ridiculous. It is become the very mark and badge of religious frenzy. As ſoon as you mention any work of the Holy Spirit, you are ſuppoſed to be a little turned in the head, and if you dare maintain the neceſſity of his grace, you are quite given over. And this ſhame and reproach is hard to bear. Many perſons, who in their conſciences aſſent to the doctrine, are terrified from owning it for fear of the world, and thereby loſe all its comforts. I am acquainted with ſeveral perſons in this unhappy ſtate. God grant you may be all free from it. But as it is a common temptation, with which it

is probable every chriſtian will be tried, it will therefore be proper to conſider it.

This is, I ſuppoſe, your ſtate. You aſſent in your minds to the truth of the doctrine, but dare not own it for fear of being called enthuſiaſts. What weakneſs is this? Conſider well what you loſe by being afraid of a nick-name. Can any thing be more weak and fooliſh, than to ſet out alone upon your journey for eternity, and to reject the only guide who can direct you ſafe, becauſe you will be ridiculed for following his directions; and ſo for fear of being laughed at, you blunder on in the wrong way, until you fall at laſt into the pit of deſtruction? And then how will this reflection add to your miſery, that you had no temptation to reject the Holy Spirit's guidance, but the ridicule of the world. The ſcripture aſſured you, that he was your only guide, and you believed it. The church of England taught you to pray to him, and to ſeek him for your only guide, and you aſſented to her doctrines. And yet you gave up the ſcripture, gave up the doctrines of your own church, for fear of a nick-name; nay more, you gave up your hopes of eternal glory. Good God, what magic is there in a name, that it ſhould charm you out of heaven! How dreadful is reproach, if it ſhould terrify you more than hell! Should not we have thought it unaccountable, if we did not ſee it every day, that a hard name, which is but a ſound and nothing more, ſhould work ſo wonderfully

derfully upon the mind. But, men and brethren, uſe your reaſon. Will you give up all that is dear and valuable to avoid a nick-name? Will you loſe all the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit for fear of being called an enthuſiaſt? Certainly you cannot act ſo weak and wicked a part, and you will not, if you fly to the Holy Spirit for grace, whenever you find reproach like to ſtagger your faith. He will enable you to overcome the temptation, if you ſeek his ſtrength. He can ſo arm you with might in the inner man, that the ridicule of the world will make no impreſſion upon you; nay he can make it ſweet, he will enable you even to bear it and love it. God grant you may now ſeek his ſtrength. O that he may now be preſent among you with his almighty grace, and diſpoſe every one of you to take him for your guide through the journey of life, and then he will fill your hearts with that perfect love of God, which will caſt out the fear of men.

But if you are not affected with theſe motives, if you ſtill ſee no neceſſity for being guided by the bleſſed Spirit, would to God I could diſcover the ſecret ſprings of your hearts, and turn them to that adorable perſon, whoſe grace alone can make you happy. O that I could convince you ſo far, as toput you this moment upon ſeeking the gracious guidance of the eternal Spirit. But this is his own work. We muſt plead and intreat, and importune you to ſeek his aſſiſtance,

but the ſucceſs muſt come from him. The word itſelf is but a dead letter, unleſs he animate it; and therefore the preaching of it can have no power, unleſs he accompany it. We may plant and water, but he muſt give the increaſe. O that it may be abundant this day to the glory of Jeſus Chriſt. And all of you who deſire it, will join your hearts with mine in requeſting it of him.

O almighty God, who as at this time didſt teach the hearts of thy faithful people by the ſending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit, ſend, we beſeech thee, the ſame Spirit to enlighten our underſtandings, that we may have a right judgment in all things, and may his grace operate with power upon our hearts, ſoftening their hard ſtony nature, and making them willing to obey the law of God; and then grant, that he may finiſh this great work, by enabling us to proceed in the ways of holineſs, until we happily end the journey of life. O may the eternal Spirit come down upon this whole congregation, and enlighten, and renew, and ſtrengthen every one of us in the inner man, that we may now and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort, through the merits of Chriſt Jeſus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Spirit, three perſons of equal honour, and glory, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen*, and *Amen*.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

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